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INTRODUCTION TO

SAI BABA

OF

SHIRDI

PART I—SECOND EDITION

WITH

DEVOTEES' EXPERIENCES

PART I

1939

BY

B. V. NARASIMHASWAMI

Price: Boards 0—8—0

Wrapper 0—6—0

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Opinions

“CHAMPION,” Calicut, writes :—“The saint’s life proved that true spirituality belongs to all religions. It proves the folly of inter-communal quarrels. Sai Baba still guides and inspires....”

Rao Bahadur MORESHWAR W. PRADHAN, J. P., B.A., LL.B., Ex. M. L. C., Bombay, says :—“Your **thought-inspiring brochure**, which I know is the outcome of your very strenuous and admirable personal efforts, for some years, in going from man to man and hamlet to hamlet far and wide as an ascetic only in search of the first-hand information, is appearing before the public at a crucial and momentous period in the history of the world. *In Sai Baba* one could clearly and distinctly see *all the faiths* and creeds of the world completely *merged* or in perfect tune with one another. A careful perusal of your brochure is sure to *interest* those that are earnestly striving *for self-realisation*. It, therefore, **deserves a world-wide circulation.**”

MR. A. R. NAGESWARA IYER, Judge of the Mysore High Court, writes :—“I have found it really **very inspiring**. You have written the life of Sai Baba in a very interesting manner showing what possibilities there are in the development of spiritual powers for elevating oneself while providing relief in every manner to those round about. A perusal of the book has in some measure improved my angle of vision and I look forward with very great interest to your further publications on the subject.”

SWAMI SUDDHANANDA BHARATI, Pondicherry (S. India), writes :—“Mahatma Sai Babaji is a **veritable fountain of the Divine Love. That fountain is** still

Opinions

SWAMI SHUDDHANANDA BHARATI, Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry, writes:—The low glooms of the twilight-mind disappear before the flaming thought of a holy person like the Saint of Shirdi. You have done full justice to the greatness of this Mahatma.

I am glad that you have brought out 'SAI BABA' just in **the right moment when India is busy after a link between two great faiths. Sai Baba is that link.** To take refuge in the Divine in man is the only way of united living. All other unions are only time-serving! Love and wisdom are the two wings of hope towards peace, bliss and harmony. That is the message of Sai Baba and you have very clearly brought it out in your charming booklet.

Dewan Bahadur K. SUNDARAM CHETTIAR, Ex-Judge, High Court of Judicature, Madras, writes:—Your precious book—this latest book of yours—will serve to still further **kindle the fire of devotion** and **dispel the darkness** of ignorance.

Dewan Bahadur M. BALASUNDRAM NAIDU, C. I. E., Ex-Sheriff, Madras, writes:—The book contains an **illuminating account** of the life of Sri Sai Baba and the miracles he performed for the welfare of his devotees near and afar. It is my earnest hope that such instructive books as this would educate a majority of those living in this Southern Peninsula about the importance of emulating the simple and devoted life of **this Satpurusha to whom humanity alone was the creed** rather than the rigid dogmas of the different religious doctrines.

A. V. IYER, B.A., B.L., Ambasamudram, writes :—Your book on ‘ Sai Baba ’—I have read it and I am re-reading it. Oh ! **What a fountain head of Love Sai Baba is !** My **heart** (as also my whole being) **is thrilled** by reading it. Tears of joy are rolling in my eyes when I peruse the various acts of love by the great Sai Baba.

SIR CHUNILAL V. MEHTA, K.C.S.I., Bombay, writes :—I have read it with interest. Those who are sympathetically inclined will **delight in reading** the experiences which you have quoted.

Dewan Bahadur V. K. RAMANUJACHARI, Kumbakonam, writes :—I listened with great attention and interest. That Sai Baba possessed wonderful powers is not inexplicable. The Great Ones, who guide the evolution of humanity require instruments thro’ whom they can pour out their peace and blessings to the World. The instruments should be thoroughly pure and unselfish. Their **self-effacement** should be **rigorous** and their **surrender to God should be supreme**. **Sai Baba possessed these requisites** in a remarkable degree.

“ SUNDAY TIMES,” Madras, writes :—Written in a simple style, this book will be useful to know the life of a great saint of Deccan.

“ HINDUSTAN,” Madras, writes :—This life of a great saint of the Maharashtra province from the pen of one who has had intimate touch with saints for many years will be highly welcome to all serious-minded people. The life is **very interesting and edifying**.



Baba in centre, his right hand is held by H S Dixit, his left by G M Buti.
Rao Bahadur M W Pradhan with garland. Figure with namam is
Das Ganu Maharaj



Abdul

SRI SAI BABA

I

SRI SAI BABA

Sai Baba is the name of an eminent saint of the Bombay Presidency, styled by various persons a 'SATPURUSHA,' a 'Bhagavatottama,' a 'Siddheswara,' a 'Paramajnani,' an 'Avatar' or an 'Avalia.' He was born of Brahmin parents at Pathri, a village in the Nizam's States. Early in his childhood, he was handed over to a Mussulman fakir, but in a few years was restored to the care of a Brahmin, viz., Gopalrao Deshmukh or Venkatesa Guru of Selu. The boy served this guru with such love and ardour that he advanced very high in *Prema Marga* and obtained the guru's *Poorna Kripa*, i.e., full grace, reaching immeasurable heights in Vairagya, Bhakti and Jnana. Wonderful and mystic powers known as *Siddhis* or *Yogaiswaryas* manifested themselves in him in the course of his God-realisation,—without any desire or effort on his part to secure them. His guru was God to him; and Love of God and Guru was the only thing that he cared for. The incidentally

accruing *siddhis** that would turn the head and ruin the hearts of many did not interest him; he kept them, in fact, ill-developed or unmanifested for a very long time. *Hari-nama-smarana* (ensouled by love) was everything to him; and these powers were mere distractions.

That guru passed away while Baba was still very young. Baba thereafter resumed his fakir's; *i.e.*, wandering, life. After visiting many places, he went over to Shirdi at the age of sixteen. After some stay, he wandered again. Finally, at the age of twenty, he settled at Shirdi and resided there till 15th October 1918, when he left his earthly body on the earth to disintegrate into its pristine elements. This Shirdi is a hamlet of Rahata, a

* Exactly like this is the description of the saint Rishaba in Srimad Bhagavata, Skandha V, Chapter V, para 35. When Rishaba was proceeding with his blissful realisation of God Vasudeva, as identical with his jiva or little self, *siddhis* unsought were developed unconsciously; such as (1) **Vaibhava**—Travelling with a physical body in the air. (2) **Manojava**—Quick flash of thought achieving all feats of intellect or reason,—intuition intensified. (3) **Antardhana**—Vanishing or becoming invisible. (4) **Parakayapravesa**—Entering into the bodies (living or dead) of other persons or animals. (5) **Dura-grahana**—Seeing things that take place at any distance. These he disregarded, as they were distractions to his realisation.

The fact that the perfectly purified mind (**विशुद्ध सत्त्व**) realises Brahman and also has power to gain access to every sphere or world and to accomplish everything it desires is attested by numerous texts from the Upanishads. *e.g.*, Mundaka Up. III (1) 8, 9 & 10; Chand. Up. VIII (12) 6; Tait. Up. III (10) 5; Khata Up. I (2) 16.

village in the Kopergaon Taluk of the Ahmednagar District, in the Bombay Presidency.

When Baba first settled there, he was in reality a highly advanced soul, an adept in the Bhakti or **Prema Marga**, perpetually immersed in his Guru-God and specially adopting *Hari-Nama-Japa* for his constant sadhana. He was a real ascetic, caring nothing for creature comforts or pleasures of the senses, living on a little begged food, wearing a coarse '*cupni*'* and sleeping first under a margosa tree† and later in a mosque. He almost wholly avoided company of the worldly and mixed only with saints and spiritually-minded people except when he went out to tend the sick and cure their diseases with his medicines, accepting no return for his services or drugs. His real spiritual eminence was known only to the saints that he came in contact with, and to the very few that constantly served him, such as Mahlsapathi. One saint described him to the villagers as a diamond lying neglected on a dunghill, and another said that the world would one day know Baba's real worth as an eminent devotee of Rama. But the generality of villagers took him to be a mere crazy fakir of no importance or merit.

One day the villagers who generally supplied him with oil for the masjid lamps, refused the

* A sort of gown.

† करतलभिक्षा तरुतलवासः i.e.,

A tree's shade is his dwelling :

His palm, the bowl for begging.

supply. That night Baba took up the lamps without oil, filled them with water and, inserting a wick in each, kept them burning all night on water alone. That gave a rude shock to the villagers' view of his being a crazy and negligible person. By that time, Baba had given up treating persons with medicines. In the course of his *Hari-Nama-Japa*, he received **Sakshatkara*** and the **Prasada** or grace of Sri Hari; and from that date he dispensed merely **Udhi**, *i.e.*, the ashes of the fire that he perpetually kept burning at his mosque, and not drugs; and the patients that tasted it or smeared it on their persons were restored to health. In cases of obsession by evil spirits, black magic, mental troubles and sorrows, the same ashes given with his blessings were used and afforded relief. Baba showered these gifts and benefits with uniform kindness and perfect equality regardless of class, caste and creed, and never accepted any reward or recompense. All this time, his visitors were mostly poor villagers of the locality or its vicinity.

On one occasion, Nana Sahab Dengle who owned a large landed estate in the neighbourhood and who was distressed on account of his being childless (though two wives were living with him at the time) sought Baba's blessings to obtain issue. The blessings were given and were followed, in due time, by the birth of a son and heir to Dengle. The official and educated circles wherein Dengle

* *i.e.*, God in the form of Hari appeared before him.

moved soon heard the news and flocked to Baba for his help and blessings.

About 1892, the District Collector's chitnis, *i.e.*, Secretary or Personal Assistant, Narayana Govind Chandorkar, B.A. (popularly known as Nana Saheb Chandorkar) and his police orderly, Ganapat Rao Dattatreya Sahasrabuddhe (popularly known as Das Ganu Maharaj) paid their respects to Baba. Struck with Baba's wonderful powers and simple life, his remarkable love, and perfect purity, they published his name and fame wherever they went. From 1908, Shirdi was consequently flooded every week with hundreds of persons in quest of Baba's *darsan* and blessings. Amongst them, were rajahs and beggars, high officials like the Revenue Commissioner, Mr. Curtis (later Sir George Seymour Curtis) and poor clerks, lawyers and politicians like Lokamanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak and ignorant peasants, Hindus, Parsis and Moslems, men, women and children, the pious, the worldlings and even criminals.

Attraction of such a vast variety of persons for a long period, naturally indicated great excellence in Sai Baba's nature and powers, attainments and character. Numerous persons have tried to study Baba's nature and doings. But these are often so deep and mysterious as to defy observation and analysis. Large volumes have been written to cover part of this study. In this introduction, we cannot pretend to touch even the fringe of the subject.

Anyhow, to give the readers just a rough idea of what Sai Baba was and is, a few brief notes may be set down here.

First and foremost, it must be mentioned that Sai Baba **is** a living personality to-day, felt by and guiding his innumerable devotees in much the same way as he guided and helped them when he was in the flesh. This is attested by almost every devotee of his; and ample proof is found in the volume relating to Devotees' experiences.* It is not merely the devotees that saw him in the body, *i. e.*, prior to October, 1918, that assert his present existence and guidance. Numerous devotees have been spurred by devotion into close contact with him after 1918, and have received and are still receiving his tangible help and guidance. Almost the entire body of the Madras devotees are of this class.

Sai Baba's continued existence is nothing surprising. In the first place, no one dies. The soul merely passes on from body to body, from state to state. But the fact remains that amongst thousands that pass away, hardly one has the necessary development and circumstances favouring his re-attraction to his former friends and foes, and interference, either by help, guidance or otherwise, in their affairs. Still, cases of such interference do occur and are fairly well-known. In the case of Baba, he definitely prepared his devotees for the continuance of such relations. He made them

* These form a separate volume.

realise, even while on earth, that he was not identical with or confined to the Sai body and that he was really everywhere, and specially to be recognised as the **Antaryami**^{*}, the innermost soul of all persons, animals and other creatures. He made them often feel, see and realise him in his portrait or picture; and numerous devotees saw or felt his presence in their own homes. Such an all-pervading personality cannot perish with the mould of clay that moved at the Shirdi mosque. Still some devotees felt what a void there would be when their daily or constant visits to Shirdi to meet and commune with him should cease by the termination of his earthly life. They expressed their fears to him. In reply he assured them that his "mortal remains would speak from the tomb," that he would be "active and vigorous" even from there. This has indeed come true. Baba's statements are always true† and reliable.

The first questions that will be asked when any saint is introduced to one's notice are (1) What is his religion? and (2) what is the good he has done or is doing?

* Cf. B. G. X 20 अहमात्मा गुडाकेश सर्वभूताश्वास्यस्थितः । i.e., "I am, O Arjuna, the soul seated in the hearts of all creatures."

† His motto may be taken as

"अनृतं नोक्तपूर्वं मे न च वक्ष्ये कदाचन"

"विद्धि मां ऋषिभिस्तुल्यं..." "रामो द्विर्नामिभाषते"

i.e., "Untruth, I have never uttered, nor will I utter it at any time." "Know me as of the same mettle as the Rishis." "Rama resiles not from his word."

II

SAI BABA AND RELIGION

Baba's greatest service was and is the planting or restoration of faith in God and in the moral law. Many turned to God and strove seriously to lead a higher life, under his inspiration and guidance. Some achieved great height in devotion, and had beatific visions of their **Ishta Devata**, *i.e.*, their special God. A very few strove to inquire into their self and **make** some advance in self-realisation. Several regarded Baba himself as their God and began to feel His presence in themselves, their fellows and in the animals and reptiles they met. Love and Universal benevolence characterise his chief devotees. Tolerance usually prevails among the diverse races, castes and creeds of his followers. All of them felt and feel renewed faith in their own God and religion, and new faith in Baba. To many Hindu devotees, Baba was and is God*—a living God, a felt presence inspiring, aiding and guiding them at every turn in their ordinary affairs, as also at critical moments like the moment of death. This view and such conduct are in entire accordance with the Upanishads, the Gita and Bhagavata.

The few facts known about Baba are so peculiar as to defy analysis and application of the usual labels, and suggest that he must be regarded as *sui generis*, a class by himself. If there is any

* Though Baba wished all to stick to their Gods, Gurus etc.

fact, however, about Baba, quite clear and well established, it is this. He was not entangled in the *Hridayagranthi* known as *Dehatma Buddhi*, i.e., the identification of self with the body. This freedom is said to be the first mark of or fundamental requisite for **Jnana** or spiritual perfection. Though Baba used current phraseology based on that delusion, he was himself above it. "I am not this three cubits and a half height of the body called Sai"; "He who thinks that Baba is in Shirdi has totally failed to see Baba," he said. One day, he voluntarily burnt his arm over the fire, and when requested to accept medical help, remarked, "It will be fine fun (for me) to stand by and watch this body (Sai body) burn on the funeral pyre." "I am formless and everywhere" he said at another time. These words and actions of Sai, bearing the evident impress of illumination and perfect detachment, bring us to the problem of personality in religion and Baba's way of dealing with it. He recognised the almost universal feeling that personality in the worshipper and in the God worshipped is the very root and foundation of religion, especially the religion of Love, and its principle of Surrender. But that very principle and Love (like Jnana or Wisdom) beginning with separateness, invariably end in the merger of the two or many into what may be called either the One or the Numberless. Distinction between the Lover and Beloved vanishes in the bliss of ecstatic

love, as in the blessed **Laya** brought on by deep introspection into the self, or God within the self. Sai Baba taught this to a very few, and made some experience the ecstasy of losing all sense of difference. "It is popularly supposed," said he, "that I am different from you, and you from me. But this view is wrong. You are in me and I in you." "My devotee feels me in you, in himself, and in all creatures." "This wall of separation (the Teli's* wall) parts you from me. If you pull it down, then we will see each other clearly, face to face. Saints do not recognise this differentiation." "If you wish to serve me, give up discrimination and differentiation."

Baba had various moods of this sort. Sometimes, he said "I am a poor fakir. I am God's slave. *Allah Malik*, i.e., God is the Master, which means, 'Thy will be done' or 'Thou art the doer—and not I.' But at other times, he said, "I am Ganapathy, †*Lakshmi Narayana*, Mahalakshmi, Datta, etc." "I am all and in all,—saints, criminals, animals, etc." "I pervade the Universe." "I created Brahma or Allah." "I am God or Brahman." "Nothing moves but by my grace." He has actually realised and passed through every one of these moods.

* A 'Teli' (oil monger) lived next to the mosque.

† *ॐ. सर्वदेवमयोह्यहम्* Bhagavat VIII यदा पश्यः पश्यते रुक्मवर्णं
 कर्त्तारमीशं पुरुषं ब्रह्मयोनिम् Mund. Up. III (1) 3.

As to the actual practice of religion, it will be noted that Baba held all religions in reverence. He pronounced the *Fatiha* and listened to the Quoran-Shariff from Muslims, and uttered Rama mantra to the Hindus and taught them the Gita. It is equally correct to call him a person of no religion or philosophic system, or of all religions and systems, or one above all religions and systems. He discouraged conversions and directed each devotee to remain in his own faith. His mosque contained and still contains the "Nimbar" towards which Mussalmans turn for prayer, a fire to which Parsis and Hindus address their worship, and the sacred basil (**Tulasi Brindavan**), and was aptly styled by him "Dwaraka Mayee," or "The Brahmins' mosque." The daily readings there under his inspiration or orders include the Puranas and other Holy books read by Hindus, and the Quoran-Shariff read by Moslems. Above all, for over thirty years, Baba is worshipped at his Mosque as a Hindu God-Guru, with Mahratti and Sanskrit **Mantras** and **Aratis** and **Puja vidhi** accompanied by the din and bustle of Hindu temple music, included in the *Shodasa Upachara* and *Raja Upachara* accorded to saints and kings.

If one is called upon to state whether there is any single feature or aspect or method of religion that he particularly favoured, one may say with confidence, that it was the religion of Love,—a religion suited to and appreciated by all creatures

of God. His main plank was **Prema** (Love); **Jnana** (Wisdom) came into it, of course. The end or goal was the Reaching of God, personal and impersonal, with and without form. The welding of the two paths (*Jnana* and *Bhakti*) in his practice and precepts can be understood by one who has made a close study of them in Srimat Bhagavata. Baba spoke to his devotee Uddavesa Bua of that Purana, as that "in which I have spoken to you, and I am speaking to you still" and directed him to meditate on Krishna-Udhavasamvada in XI Skanda. One frequently notes in that Purana that the goal of life and all endeavour is said to be Vasudeva, also styled *Para Brahman*, who is described as the source and end of everything and beyond everything, as both Personal and Impersonal, and whose fuller description is declared to be impossible. This is the Bhagavati Gati (Satvakas' goal) and the Jnani's end also. And this is indistinguishable from the goal referred to by Baba.*

The eminence of Baba as a saint is not in his striking out a new line of thought or expounding a new philosophical or religious system. His greatness consists in drawing to himself men without any faith or adequate faith in their own ancient systems. Few, whether Hindus or Muslims, have real living faith in the saving truths of religion ;

* This is also the Sufis' goal. Kabir is said to be a Sufi. Kabir's religion is Baba's: Baba stated that he was Kabir, in one of his former births.

and few understand the rationale or use of the religious forms and observances that the conservative sections still keep up. The younger and the thoughtless, even when not scoffing at religion, have no perception of its use or importance, kick at all restraints, and launch into a life of mere worldly pleasure and vanity. To bring this generation back to a sense of the worth and value of religion* (धर्मसंस्थापन) requires the might of a spiritual giant. Such a giant came to its rescue in Baba. His vast knowledge of all times, places and systems, his perfect selflessness and purity ensure for him a position of command over his fellows. No one knows all that Sai has done for the amelioration of the condition of individuals and society: and even the facts known can only be gleaned out of numerous volumes. In this introduction, just a few of them will be placed before the reader to give him a glimpse of Sai Baba, his nature and work.

Once questioned by a Commissioner, about his race, religion and profession, Sai Baba answered that he was Parvardigar (*i.e.*, God), Kabir, (or Kabiri) in religion, engaged in bestowing दुवा *i.e.*, blessings. As his entire life-time was devoted to the showering of blessings, we cannot, to understand Baba's religion, do better than narrate a few varieties of such blessings, and note how they

* Cf. धर्मसंस्थापनार्थं संभवामि युगे युगे । (B. Gita IV, 8)
i.e., I am born in every age to sustain Religion.

affected his main work for the uplift of men. His blessing Nana Saheb Dengle with issue has already been mentioned. We may add some more instances under that head.

III

BABA'S BLESSINGS FOR ISSUE

Sri Damodar Savalram Rasne, a devout and prosperous bangle merchant now living at Poona, went to Sri Sai Baba about 1895 and was ardently attached to Baba's service. He had two wives living with him for sometime and yet had no issue. To add to his distress, astrology declared that, with *Ketu* in the fifth place from his *Lagna*, in his horoscope, he could not hope for any issue in this life. He had firm faith in Baba however; and Baba blessed him in a very remarkable manner. One day, Baba distributed a basket of mangoes to the assembled crowd of boys and men at his mosque, and put by eight mangoes, expressly stating that they were reserved for "**Damia**" (*i.e.*, D. S. Rasne) who however was not present then at Shirdi. In a very short time, he arrived there; but before his arrival the boys had purloined four fruits; and Baba gave him the remaining four. Baba told him, not to eat the fruits himself, but to give them to his junior wife, that she would, after eating them and in due course, bring forth eight

children, that his first would be a son whom he should name Daulat Shah, that the second, also a son, should be named Nana Shah, etc. What ! Counting the chickens before they are hatched ! Christening, *i.e.*, naming babies before they are born ! What wonder is this ! Yet every word that Baba spoke was fulfilled. The lady ate the fruits. In one year thereafter she had a son, and in another year or two, another son. Later she begot more. On the whole she begot just eight children and not more. Of these, Death filched away four, leaving Damia just four sons.

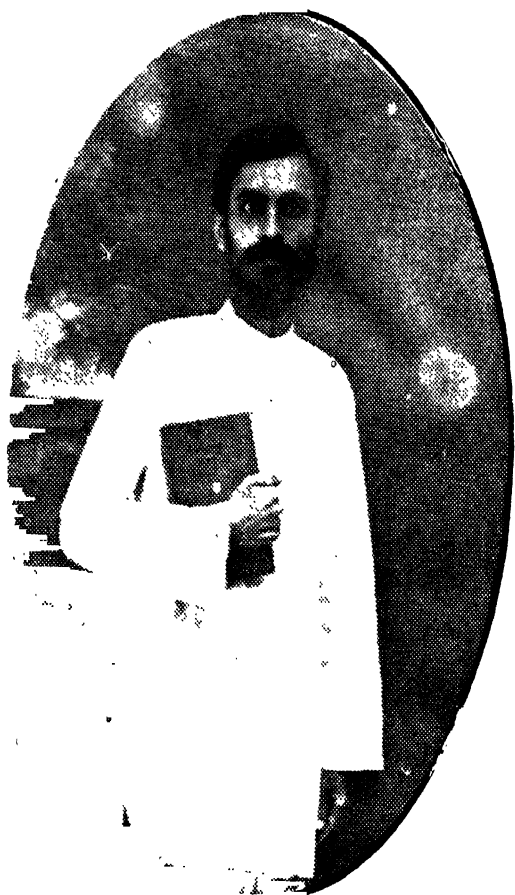
Dasaratha, a childless monarch, performed grand sacrifices, *Yagas* with the help of Rishyasringa, Vasishta and other rishis of great renown ; and a divine figure issued forth from the fire of the *Homa* and presented the king with blessed *Havishya* the consumption of which by the three queens resulted in their obtaining four sons. So says the Ramayana. Several Hindus that might not have strong faith in that scripture would obtain such faith after noting this grand achievement by Sai for the benefit of a merchant who had not funds enough to celebrate a great Yaga or fortune enough to summon great rishis to his aid. Many people concluded that Sri Sai was not less eminent and powerful than the rishis mentioned above and that his presence at Shirdi was a special dispensation of Providence for the benefit of this age.

In numerous cases, Baba conferred his blessings for issue, and the persons blessed, invariably obtained issue. Of these, we may touch upon two only and pass on. A Mrs. Aurangabadkar had 27 years of connubial life with her husband and had not conceived even once. Medical and popular opinion declared her incurably barren. But with powerful faith in Sai Baba, she came to Shirdi ; and on the intercession of " Shama," *i.e.*, Mr. Madhava Rao Deshpande*, Baba gave her his blessings and said that in twelve months' time, she would beget a son. And she did beget a son at the end of that period. A lawyer at Akkalkote, one Sapatnekar had, in his student life, treated Baba's name with contempt. Within ten years thereafter, while he was a practising lawyer, he lost his only son ; and that broke his heart. Remembering his former contempt for Baba, he repented and went to Shirdi. At his first visit, he met with a very chill reception. But a year later, his wife saw Baba in her dream and was invited to Shirdi with her husband. On this occasion, Baba after revealing his wonderful and intimate knowledge of all the leading incidents in the lawyer's life, told him to have faith, then blessed him, and said that he (Baba) would bring that identical soul, the departed child back to its mother's womb. And in one year thereafter, the promised son was born.

* He lives at Shirdi. Baba always called him Shama.



Damodar S. Rasane.



(Daulat Shah) Dattareya S. Rasane.

IV

BLESSINGS TO CHILDREN

When the benevolent and powerful Sai gave such blessings to his devotees, would they stop troubling him with requests? On the other hand, every turn and incident in life furnished them with more opportunities and excuses for further importunity. When ladies were promised issue, the anxious season of delivery and parturition troubles led to further prayers, and Baba ran (invisibly) to their rescue and averted dangers. When babies were born, their constant ailments and risks of accident called for Baba's help, and he intervened with remarkable help in many cases. Mr. S. B. Nachne's statement of experience is full of thrilling instances of such relief. Baba looking at a child at Shirdi said one day : " When this child is sleeping, we have to stand by and keep watching." That same child was walking some days later through a water-gutted lane in that village. On one side of it there was a five feet deep trench, dug up for the foundation of a house, but as it was full of storm water, it was indistinguishable from the lane and the child of three or four summers walked into it. As the child did not know how to swim and as there was none just then present, it must have been drowned. But some how, it came out. Asked how it came out, the child said that Baba showed it the steps cut at

one end and that it climbed up those steps. A three-years-old girl, named Santi Kirwandikar at Shirdi used to call Baba her elder brother. One day she slipped down a draw well. People ran up and found that the child was neither hurt by the fall, nor drowned in the water. She was in the water, but holding on to a projecting ledge. Asked how she escaped unhurt, she replied, "Baba held me up in his hands, as I fell." There was no other explanation for her safety. H. S. Dixit, B.A., LL.B., (Ex. M. L. C.) a leading solicitor of Bombay, had given up his worldly ambition and was entering on a spiritual career under Baba's care and protection. To encourage his perfect detachment, Baba said to him at Shirdi one day, "Hallo, Kaka, (that is how Baba always addressed him) *why do you worry yourself with cares? All responsibility is mine.*" H. S. Dixit said 'yes,' but did not know if there was any necessity for this declaration on that particular day. A few days later, he went home to Ville Parle where his wife and children lived, and learnt that on the very day of Baba's declaration, his young daughter (aged about 6 or 7) had an accident. An almyrah (full of toys) near which the child was playing suddenly fell on her. But, strange to say, the child had no hurt at all, except breaking her glass bangles and getting slightly scratched thereby. All the weight that fell on her appeared to have been gently lowered and the toys etc., seemed to have been placed

away from her. It was then that Dixit discovered the appropriateness of Baba's remark.

A Bombay lady and her son were great devotees of Baba. Baba told them one morning that at 2 P.M. they should return to the mosque ; and they did. Baba then told the boy to sit on a mat near himself and warned him not to leave the mat without permission. At 3 P.M., a savage looking female figure with dishevelled hair and horrid features jumped over the compound wall into the mosque. She approached the boy and said " I want to take this boy." Baba said " No." She still persisted and proceeded to seize the boy. Baba got up and gave her a kick that made her howl, get away from the mosque and disappear. That woman, Baba declared, was the Goddess of Cholera ; and Baba added that he had saved the boy from cholera and that the danger had passed away. The boy saw the woman's figure and what passed, but was benumbed and could hear nothing.

Numerous were the occasions when Baba saved children from disease, sometimes by his blessings with udhi, sometimes without the udhi. In some cases he drew diseases on to himself from the sick patients. The late Dewan Bahadur G. S. Khaparde with his wife and two sons was spending some months at Shirdi in 1911 and 1912. Plague started at Shirdi and one of the sons was having fever. Mrs. G. S. Khaparde was in terror and wanted leave to go away from Shirdi. But

Baba told her, in highly figurative language, that the danger would pass off. Her fears were still unabated. Then Baba showed her and "Shama", his own huge bubos and said "Mother, I have to suffer this, on your account." That is, to save her son, Baba had drawn the disease on to himself. That son got better and Baba also after sometime recovered his health. Baba extended a similar favour to Mrs. Manager of the Holy City. When that lady had aching eyes with water constantly dripping from them, Baba looked at her. Then her eyes ceased to water and Baba's eyes were dripping tears.

V

BABA, THE GUARDIAN ANGEL

One finds it difficult to believe that anyone would protect another's life or health with the sacrifice of his own. But this is the ideal set forth in the Bhagavata V (5) 18.

गुरु न स स्यात् स्वजनो न स स्यात् ।

पिता न स स्या ज्ञननी न सा स्यात् ।

दैवं न तत् स्या न्नपतिश्च स स्यात्

न मोचयेद्यः समुपेतमृत्युम् ॥ *i.e.*,

One who does not save a person from death—physical or spiritual (*i.e.* Samsara) is not a guru, father, mother, God, husband nor kinsman. To Sai Baba, this was no copy book maxim. His guru

“ Venkusa ” sacrificed his own life while saving Baba from a shower of stones pelted by some villagers of Selu. Baba in his turn was equally determined to sacrifice his life, his health and everything for those who placed their implicit faith in him.

- *“ *If one devotes his entire mind to me and rests in me, he need fear nothing for body and soul. If one perpetually thinks of me and makes me his sole refuge, I am his debtor and will give my head to save him.*” .

These declarations of Baba are not extravagant professions. Baba, a धर्मात्मा सत्यसंधश्च never spoke anything but the truth. We shall immediately proceed to narrate some more of the numerous instances proving his parental kindness, and vigilance in guarding the life, health and interests of his devotees.

Did Baba ever really offer his head to save devotees? Yes. A number of times. The first occasion was long ago, when the local Muslims banded together, sent for the Sangamnère Kazi and resolved by force to stop what they considered as desecration of the mosque by the Hindus' worship of Baba there with sandal paste. Mahlsapathy alarmed at the prospect of being clubbed to death

* Cf. B. G. IX 22 अनन्याः चिन्तयन्तो मां ये जनाः पर्युपासते ।
तेषां नित्याभियुक्तानां योगक्षेमं वहाम्यहम् ॥

tried to do his pooja of Baba from outside the compound wall. But Baba invited him inside, directed him to go on with sandal paste and usual forms of worship and defied orthodoxy to use its force. There was great risk run in adopting this course, as a good number of Muslims were outside, watching the proceedings and ready with clubs. But the very daring of the Shirdi Wizard cowed down opposition; and no violence was used. Again some twenty years later (1914-15), on similar grounds, when Baba, with R.A. Tarkhad and others was sleeping at the Chavadi, a fanatic got up at dead of night and wished to cut the throat of all Hindus there as they were spoiling him and adjured Baba to grant him leave. Just then Tarkhad woke up and wondered if he and others were to be murdered in cold blood. But the loving father Sai was there to save them. Baba told the fanatic that the Hindus were not to blame for worshipping him, that it was his own madness that spoiled them and resulted in the heterodox worship; and he offered his own throat for cutting—if any throats had to be cut. That fanatic's blood-thirst did not go so far as to cut the throat of an eminent Moslem 'Avalia'* and Baba again escaped harm. A year or two later, there came a still fiercer fanatic named the "Rohilla" who though not of the Rohilla tribe, was as lawless and

* Baba was taken by Moslems for a Muslim—but by some for an eccentric and heterodox Avalia, a crazy saint.

truculent a dare-devil as the worst of that tribe. That man struck with the wonderful powers and genius of Baba called him "Paygambar," *i.e.*, God. Yet he was repelled by Baba's heterodox tolerance of Hindu polytheism and image worship and above all by the worship of Baba at the mosque with the din of Hindu music, mantras and rituals. He came up to slay Baba with a club. Baba just cast a glance at him and touched his wrist. This paralysed the Rohilla who sank to the ground like lead.

There are innumerable instances of Baba's facing disease in trying to save his children—the devotees. We may just touch upon a few here. But before doing so, it may be mentioned that Baba lost his health, vigour and ultimately life, by the interminable strain of meeting hundreds of devotees and visitors every day and having to think out and provide for their needs in a variety of ways. To G. S. Khaparde, he said in December 1910, that for two years (*i.e.*, ever since the crowding into Shirdi began) he had not been well, that the trouble would last as long as he lived at Shirdi and till he went to his native town (*i.e.* God), that he cared more for his people than for his own life, that he found no rest as people troubled him and that it could not be helped. He would not shirk or evade trouble as "to that end he was born, and for that cause he came into the world."

Mr. Santaram Balawant Nachne is the head clerk of the Taluk Sheristadar's office at Kurla and

a staunch devotee of Baba. In 1913, when he visited Baba, the latter made a general observation, "We should not trust mad men." This did not strike Mr. Nachne as a remark of any use or significance for him. But some time later, he was at home attending to the pooja of his domestic images and Baba's photo. There was a crazy person standing at some distance. But as he was thought to be harmless, Mr. Nachne did not mind his presence in the house and went on with his pooja. Suddenly, however, the mad man plunged into the pooja room, seized Nachne's neck with both his hands and was attempting to bite his throat saying, "I will drink your blood."

Mr. Nachne was suddenly inspired with courage and with an idea as to the method of repulsing the attack. He thrust his sacred spoon (*Uddharani*) with the finger holding it into the mad man's wide-open mouth, and with his other hand tried to pull the mad man's hand off his neck. Mr. Nachne then lost consciousness. Others in the house rushed to his rescue and saved his life by pulling off the mad man. When Mr. Nachne visited Shirdi next, Baba revealed the part he had played in this incident. Addressing one Anna, Baba said, "Hallo, Anna, had I delayed a moment, this man (pointing to Mr. Nachne) would have expired; for, the mad man had seized his very throat.

But I extricated him. What is to be done? If I do not protect my own children, who else will?"

Baba on another occasion said,

- *"I will not allow my devotees to come to harm. I have to take thought for my devotees. And if a devotee is about to fall, I stretch out my hands, thus; and with four and four hands at a time* I support him. I will not let him fall."*

Here is one more instance of Baba's outstretched arms to save the life of devotees. Nana Saheb Chandorkar, one of the foremost among them was constantly thinking of Baba and regarding him as his sole refuge. Nana was one day driving in a tonga near Poona. Suddenly the horses reared and upset the carriage. That was a critical moment when even the life of Nana was imperilled. Sai Baba, the everwatchful and Argus-eyed, shouted out at that very moment at Shirdi (about 100 miles away from Poona) "Alas! Nana is about to die! *But will I let him die?"* Turning to the Poona road, we may see the outcome of the accident. Nana and another occupant of the tonga merely tumbled down, but received no hurt at all. When Nana visited Shirdi next, he was informed

* Cf. St. Matthew IV. 6. He shall give his angels charge concerning thee; and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone. Dent (33) 27. Underneath are the everlasting arms.

by the devotees there of Baba's words on the above occasion ; and he then discovered the real explanation of his safe escape.

On another occasion, it was Nana Saheb's daughter, Matusri Minathai, then a girl of seventeen that needed help and protection. It was her first delivery time. The pains of labour were very acute and prolonged, so acute indeed that death seemed preferable. There was no medical help in that place, (Jamnere) from which Jalagaon, (the nearest Railway station in those days *i.e.*, 1904), was thirty miles off. Patient Nana Saheb in his distress went on with his *homa* etc., and did not communicate her plight to Baba. He never intimated such incidents to Baba. For, Baba himself at times declared,

*Whatever you do, where ever you may
be, ever bear this in mind, that I am
always aware of everything you do.*

Baba knew of Nana's distress and implicit faith, and gave some *Udhi* to a Gosavai at Shirdi and directed him to go to Jamnere and deliver it to Nana for his daughter's use. The Gosavai had only two rupees in hand, just sufficient for the railway fare to the Jalagaon station and not enough money to convey him thence (thirty miles by road) to Jamnere. But Baba cryptically said to him, "Go, God will provide everything." When the Gosavai alighted at the station, Jalagaon, there was a peon in livery and a

good tonga waiting for him. The peon said they had been sent by Nana Saheb. Proceeding by the tonga to Jannere, he delivered the *Udhi* to Nana Saheb. Within five minutes of its application, the lady had a safe delivery. When the tonga and peon were mentioned to Nana Saheb, he was surprised, for, there was no intimation of any one coming from Shirdi and neither peon nor tonga had been sent by him. The miraculous provision of tonga and peon were no greater wonders, however, than Sai's marvellous supervision* over the devotees' affairs and the kind despatch of timely aid to save a girl from death, and torture worse than death.

These were cases when Baba was in the flesh. In 1926 or 1927, *i.e.*, long after Baba's *maha-samadhi*, he saved his devotee's life in thrilling circumstances. A party of Bombay devotees were returning to Bombay after attending Baba's Ramnavami Utsava at Shirdi. When the train reached Thana, one of the ladies got down the platform, filled a vessel with water from the tap and tried to get back into her carriage, with the vessel on her waist. When her foot was yet on the footboard the train moved and she fell down between the moving train and the platform. The husband and others shouted out and tried to stop the train. But the train had moved on a consider-

* Cf. The eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show himself strong on behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward Him. 2 Chron. XVI, 9.

able distance, before it ultimately stopped. Persons ran up to see the lady's condition and expected to see only a mangled corpse. What was their surprise to see that the lady was standing up as they approached ! She then narrated how at the very moment of her fall, she thought of Baba. And lo ! Baba was by her side, pressing her against the platform wall to prevent her limbs being cut by the rolling wheels. Of course, there is no room for a man to stand between the wheels and her body so pressed. But it was Baba that stood and to Baba nothing was impossible. None, however, except the lady saw Baba. Invisibility is a *Siddhi* which is achieved even through yogic practice. But the heart and eye that ever watch the fate of thousands of devotees in all places and the kindness that rushes to their rescue before they utter a word of prayer are not achievements of yoga. They are the hall marks of Divine Love, a Love that says, "And it shall come to pass that before they call, I will answer, and while they are yet speaking, I will hear," and extorts a return of love, with words like these :—

सत्याशिषो हि भगवन् तव पादपद्म

मार्शस्तथानुभजतः पुरुषार्थमूर्त्यै ।

अप्येवमर्थं भगवन् परिपाति दीनान्

वाश्रेव वत्सकमनुग्रहकतरोऽस्मान् ॥ i.e.,

Yearns to suckle its calf the cow.

To bless us babes, so yearnest Thou !

VI

TEMPORAL BENEFITS AND THEIR SPIRITUAL EFFECT

So far we have dealt with cases of averting physical death. Has Sai been helpful in averting the spiritual death termed Samsara? It is a well-known fact that 99 per cent of the visitors of Sai did not go to him for *mukti* or salvation. They went only for the redress of felt grievances, urgently demanding redress. While the stomach is starved and the family is poorly protected against wind and rain, people's minds cannot turn easily to spiritual improvement. Yet frequently, it is their worldly need that induces them to have faith. That is the seed of religion, or the spring from which the spiritual stream starts and goes on to *mukti*. Hence these going to Baba in quest of worldly benefits were not repulsed. They were often drawn by him to himself in pursuance of **Rinanubandha**, i.e., pre-natal ties, to secure worldly benefits from him, to resume his company in this life and begin it with fresh gratitude and faith. Hence he conferred many worldly blessings on them. Securing a hold on their affections, he was in a stronger position to rebuke their vices, to make them repent, change their ways and start on the spiritual career he prepared for them. Even the most intimate devotees like Nana Saheb Chandorkar could seldom make out his plans. But

people like Nana implicitly trusted him and he used his super-human powers to increase their faith and love. In numerous matters relating to journeys, mercantile or business transactions, employment, promotion, pension, transfers, punishments, appeals, treatment of disease, social and domestic problems, etc., Baba gave constant help and guidance to the devotees; and the invariable benefits accruing from these have strengthened their admiration, devotion and love to him. Each sincere and earnest devotee becomes a centre from which Sai's blessed influence radiates all around. A perusal of the statements furnished by these devotees will give one some idea of the nature and extent of such help, guidance and influence. We may notice a few typical instances of such help and influence, first, before dealing with the final drive to the goal.

Sustenance

Food is the first requisite of life; and numbers crowded to Baba's feet in quest of it. To the very poor who badly needed immediate doles, Baba gave ample and liberal help. Sai Baba always set an example of hospitality, *Atitya*. He would never taste even his begged food without letting other persons have a share. Dogs and crows always had theirs. After Bombay crowds poured their daily *Naivedyas*, i.e., food-offerings, Baba's daily doles enabled a large contingent of beggars and fakirs to live permanently at Shirdi. But there are

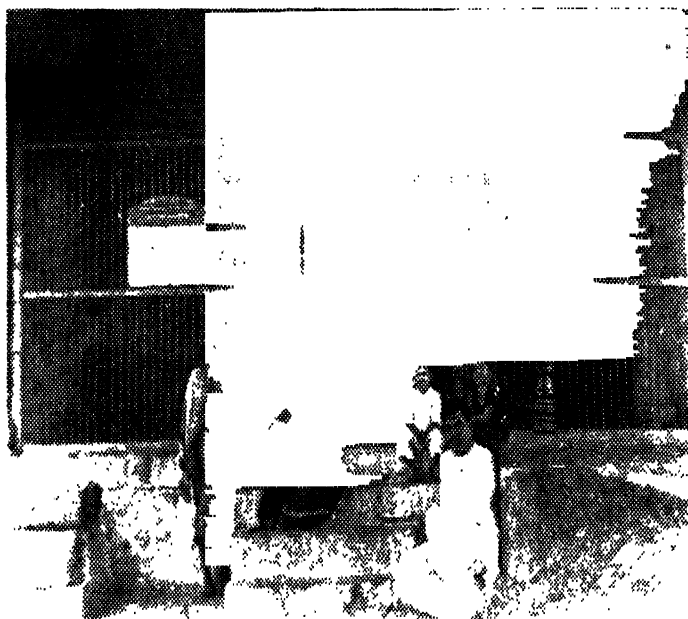
beggars and beggars—for even Emperors beg. Numerous persons wished to get employment or promotion but failed to pass the required tests or secure the necessary patronage. Baba helped these to pass their examinations and secure employment. Of such cases, we shall cite just one. One Cholkar found that he could gain no living without passing an examination and that the examination was too hard for his capacity. He prayed to Baba for success and employment and vowed that he would go on pilgrimage to see Baba, if he succeeded. Then he passed his examination and got a poor pay which did not enable him to save the railway fare. He then saved that money by small economies such as abstention from sugar even for his tea. When he went up to see Baba, the latter told his host to give Cholkar, tea with *plenty of sugar*. Doctor Tendulkar, when a medical student, was extremely diffident and feared that he was not sufficiently coached up to answer his examination papers. The astrologers he consulted confirmed his fears; and he was hopeless. Baba assured him of success and directed him to cast aside Astrology and boldly attend the examination. He did so and secured a pass. Similar help was extended to H. S. Dixit's son and to others. Sapatnekar, of Akkalkot, had a friend in his student days, that was appearing for the Law examination. That friend had not prepared his subjects well enough and yet hoped to pass his examination. When asked by Sapatnekar, why

he was so confident, the reply was that Baba had assured him of success. Sapatnekar jeered at him for being "fool enough" to believe such trash. Baba's words were trash in Sapatnekar's estimation. But the results came and that friend passed. Sapatnekar wondered at it but regarded it as a fluke, and had no belief in Sai Baba's powers. Ten or eleven years later, he changed his views and discovered what vast powers—to control the living and the 'dead'—were in Baba.

Baba's declarations read like charters in favour of the public or his devotees. "**In my devotees' houses, there shall be no lack of food and clothing,**" he said. True to his word, Baba has provided them with maintenance at least sufficient for ordinary comfort, if not on a lavish scale. Two excellent instances are those of Das Ganu Maharaj and Upasani Maharaj both of whom were directed by Baba to devote themselves *exclusively* to God and Religion and not to care for wealth. When the former resigned his service without any saving pension or property, Baba promised help; and D.G. has never lacked food and comfort and has some property now. When the latter went to Baba, he owned practically nothing and resigned himself to the care of Sai Baba, and is now (thanks to Baba's grace) in possession of an estate that suffices to support him and the large establishment at his Asrams.



“Nimbar ” within Dwaraka Mayee (mosque)



Dwaraka Mayee (mosque) Entrance

VII

VARIOUS BLESSINGS AND THEIR EFFECTS

Business transactions.—Baba seldom interfered in business matters. But at the call of powerful devotion he had at times to advise and help even in these. The best way of gripping Baba's loving heart is total surrender to him. **"You should cast all your burdens on me. I will bear them. If you look to me, I will look to you,"** he said to several devotees. "You are my only refuge. Whom else have I to rely upon?" must be the cry of one's heart. That was exactly Mr. Damodar S. Rasne's feeling. Quite simple and unsophisticated, he trusted entirely to Baba and would never take a single step in his life without consulting and getting the sanction of Baba. He was running a modest but profitable business. Once a Bombay broker tempted him with a venture which might secure for him profits in lakhs of rupees. Mr. Rasne wrote at once to Shirdi for Baba's approval. But Baba turned it down saying "Damia is wanting to catch the sky. He should be content with what he has." Then Mr. Rasne tried to induce Baba to change his views by offering him a percentage on the profits. Baba declared that he would not get entangled in pecuniary matters. That proposal was dropped. Next a merchant suggested to Mr. Rasne that he should join a partnership for purchase and storage of

wheat, etc., as grains were steadily rising in price. Baba, when consulted, turned down that proposal also, saying "You will be buying at five measures for the rupee and selling at seven." The friend thought Rasne was too pusillanimous and unwise and pointed to the high prices that prevailed for many weeks after the proposal was dropped. But after that period, what happened? Rains, abundant rains were reported all over the country, and grain-prices went down and the slump continued for a very long time. Baba's prevision and kind fore-warning had saved Mr. Rasne from a serious financial calamity. He and other devotees had numerous proofs of Baba's knowledge of everything and his love towards themselves, and never hesitated to follow implicitly and blindly every direction that he gave them. They found that such directions were the best for them alike in their material and higher interests.

Promotions, Pensions, etc.—Mr. B. V. Dev, Mamlatdar and Mr. H. V. Sathe, Deputy Collector, had each a block in his promotion. The latter complained to Baba about it. Baba assured him that matters would be set right; and suddenly he (H. V. S.) got a promotion of Rs. 100/- and a lift over the head of some seniors also. The former did not complain of it; and that block was not what took him to Baba. But Baba at that first visit was aware of it, and spoke in his peculiar manner, conveying a meaning only to the concerned party,

“Oh, this is a dispute about Rs. 25/- I have told the big man (*i.e.*, the superior) to pay it. He would not. Where will it go? He will give it in two or four months.” The truth was that Mr. Dev was entitled to get into the higher grade (which involved a rise in his pay of Rs. 25/-) and that this lift was long being withheld from him. Baba’s words proved true, for in three or four months’ time Mr. Dev got the lift and increase in pay. This event served to confirm Mr. Dev’s faith in Baba which a companion of his, a Kavle Patel was trying to undermine.

In the matter of Rao Bahadur H. V. Sathe’s pension, an initial decision was reached by the pensions department which ignored his final *sub protem* appointment and consequently reduced the proper figure by Rs. 50/- When H. V. Sathe complained of it to Baba, the latter forcibly expressed himself and said that he would make them pay the full pension through the nose. H. V. S. took the matter before the Revenue Commissioner who granted him the full pension as claimed.

Fines etc.—Mr. G. G. Shiriyan is deeply devoted to Baba. In 1928, he was, on very flimsy grounds or none, blamed and fined by his superior. That night, he prayed to Baba, who answered him (in a dream) that he would set matters right. The next day, when he went to his office, he found that without any appeal or representation on his part, the

superior had changed his opinion. G. G. Shiryan was exculpated and an innocent boy was made the scapegoat. That boy was fined. That helpless boy and G. G. Shiryan both prayed to Baba who (in a dream) assured G. G. Shiryan that the fine would be cancelled in 73 days' time. The boy, however, did not appeal or apply for review or mercy. On the 70th day, the boy's immediate superior sent a representation to the officer who imposed the fine and it was cancelled—exactly on the 73rd day.

Another remarkable case of mind control by Baba may be noted, next. A servant of Baba and five others were convicted by a Taluk Magistrate and sentenced to imprisonment. The Magistrate's judgment rested on the direct evidence (which he accepted as credible) of half a dozen witnesses to the occurrence. Able and experienced lawyers and magistrates who saw a copy of it at Shirdi considered it a hopeless case for appeal. But Baba to whom the matter was taken merely directed the friend of the appellants (who were in jail) to go to 'Bhav,' *i.e.*, Mr. S. B. Dhumal, (subsequently, Rao Bahadur) pleader of Nasik. The latter perused the papers and was disinclined to take up the engagement at first; but being informed that it was Baba's order that he should work for the appeal, he went before the Ahmadnagar District Magistrate with his appeal memo and judgment. To that Magistrate's query what it was all about, he briefly narrated the facts.

Then the Magistrate said that the case looked strong, resting as it did on such a number of eye-witnesses' testimony. Mr. S. B. Dhumal retorted that the number of witnesses is no criterion, especially in a faction-ridden village like Shirdi. "Do you think so?" said the Magistrate. "Think! Why, I know it," was the ready response. The Magistrate at once took up the appeal memo and without issuing notice to the complainant, the police or the Public Prosecutor and without calling for the papers wrote out an appellate judgment on the appeal memo itself, acquitted all the accused and then asked the vakil whether Sai Baba was a Hindu or Moslem and what it was he taught. Before the vakil returned to Shirdi, Baba had called some of the devotees who were going to attend a very disheartening funeral, to stay with him a while, as they would presently see a *chamatkar*, i.e., miracle. They did not however stay with him long enough. After they left the mosque, the vakil arrived and informed the villagers of the astounding news of the summary acquittal, which, they discovered, was the *chamatkar* that Baba had mentioned. They realised that Baba's vast control over people's minds was directed to secure summary justice for those that placed their faith in him. With Baba, all things are possible.

Diseases.—The last mentioned incident might appear to a highly critical mind as nothing more than thought-control, which several persons making

experiments in hypnotism might achieve. We may next refer to incidents where Baba's help and powers do not admit of so easy an explanation. Here is a case indeed where Baba used a human being, or his leg rather, as his means for effecting treatment of disease, without the owner of the leg using his will at all in the matter.

Dr. Chidambaram Pillai, a very devoted *bhaktā* of Baba, had guinea worm and his sufferings were so intolerable that he sent word to Baba that instead of wiping out his past karma through those sufferings, he would pray to Baba that the sufferings might be staved off for the present life and spread over ten succeeding lives of his. Baba rebuked such folly and pointed out that there was no necessity for taking ten more births for that purpose and that *Satpuruṣhas exist to give him relief by enabling him to endure all the sufferings in ten days and restoring health at once*. Baba sent for the doctor and made him lie down at the mosque and told him that a crow would come and peck at his wound and end his troubles. A little later, perhaps the next day, Abdul,* a faithful servitor of Baba (whom Baba welcomed at his first arrival at Shirdi with the words 'My crow is come') in trying to clean and light lamps at the mosque suddenly put his foot

* Still living at Shirdi and daily reading his Quoran as instructed by Baba. He uses that book for reading the future and giving his blessings to the devotees who go to him.

without being guided by his own consciousness—on the swollen leg of Dr. Pillai, who at once roared with pain. But this painful operation had a remarkable effect. All the collected pus and the string worms were forcibly squeezed out, completely. In a few days, Dr. Pillai regained his health. Here if the crow's leg was used to perform the required surgical operation, the crow's mind was not.

Next we shall proceed to more puzzling instances of relief. We have read of the kind Jewish Saviour who by laying his hands on the eyes of the blind restored sight to them. The Shirdi Saviour's kindness was exerted in a similar way at times. Vittal Rao Yeshwant Deshpande's grandfather was a stoneblind old man some twenty-five years ago. But he had great faith in Baba and was consequently taken to Shirdi and led into Baba's mosque. While bowing to Baba he said sadly, "I cannot see." Baba said at once, "You will." Thereafter, Baba placed his hands on the old man's head. At once, sight was restored and the old man, seeing everything clearly, wept tears of joy, and without any help or guidance walked through the streets of Shirdi and travelled back by train to Bombay.

"Laying on of hands" though not easily explained, is a well-known method of cure of infirmities. But Baba's methods were so numerous, varied and incomprehensible that they cannot

be easily sorted and labelled. We may quote just two or three instances.

Sriman K. G. Buty, a rich devotee from Nagpur, had an attack of Cholera while he was at Shirdi and his thirst was very severe. Dr. Pillai consulted Baba as to the drink that could allay that thirst. Baba prescribed an infusion of almonds, etc., boiled in sugared milk. This would be considered a fatal aggravation of the disease by any doctor, Western or Indian. But in implicit obedience to Baba's order, that drink (or food) was administered, and it cured the Cholera. Kaka Mahajani, another devotee, had Diarrhoea and very frequent motions. Just when he was at the pavilion in front of the mosque, Baba shouted out with terrible anger and every one ran away. While Kaka also was trying to move away, Baba came up to him and made him sit there. Some one, at the stampede, had left behind a quantity of groundnut. Baba made Kaka eat plenty of the groundnut and drink water. This, according to medical opinion, is the surest way of increasing the motions. But in Kaka's case, it stopped the motions and he was cured. Another case of cure is still more inexplicable. A man suffering from intermittent fever sought the aid of Baba, who thereupon gave him this very strange recipe. "Take good boiled rice with curds. Go to that temple (naming one) in the village. A black dog will meet you. Give it the rice and curds." The man implicitly obeyed Baba and was cured

One more instance, we may cite here of Baba's wonderful cures and close the list.

One Bhimaji who was suffering from a severe and chronic chest disease (Tuberculosis, it must have been) was brought by Shama who begged Baba to cure him. Baba pointed out that the disease was due to previous evil karma of theft and was at first disinclined to interfere. Then that patient cried out in despair that he was a *saranagata** i.e., that he sought refuge, and that Baba was his sole hope, and prayed for mercy. Then

• Regarding the power of *Saranagati*, i.e., absolute surrender and seeking refuge, the reader will remember how Draupadi was saved. In the midst of an assembly, Dussasana tried to rip off her clothing and put her to shame. But at that critical moment, she surrendered her soul to Sri Krishna in *Saranagati* and cried,

शंखचक्रगदापाणे द्वारकानिलयाच्युत ।
 गोविन्द पुण्डरीकाक्ष रक्षमां शरणागताम् ॥
 हा कृष्ण द्वारकावास कासि यादवनन्दन ।
 इमामवस्थां सम्प्राप्ता मनार्थां किमुपेक्षसे ॥

i.e., Oh Achyuta, of Dwaraka, bearing conch, discus and mace in Thy hands, Oh, lotus eyed Govinda, save me. I seek refuge at Thy feet. Oh, Krishna of Dwaraka ! Oh, darling of Yadavas ! Where art Thou ? Art *Thou* slighting me, unprotected and reduced to this strait as I am ?

Then was the miracle seen. Cloth after cloth was torn off from her any number of times. A fresh cloth was always covering her person, as each previous cloth was pulled away ; and ignominy was averted. Surrender moves Saints and Avatars.

Baba's heart melted and he said, "Stay, cast off your anxiety.

Your sufferings for your past karma have come to an end directly you put your feet on Shirdi soil. The wretched and the miserable rise into joy and happiness as soon as they climb the steps of the mosque.

That fakir (Guru God of Baba) is very kind and will eradicate your disease. He will show his love. He is so kind to all."

Baba made him stay in a chavadi and cured him through dreams. In the first dream, he was in his boyish years and suffered the severe pain of a birching which he received for not reciting his lessons properly before his elementary class teacher. In the next dream, some one caused him intense torture and alarm by rolling a stone-roller up and down over his chest. With the pain thus suffered his karmic debt was evidently liquidated and his cure was complete. The man went home in perfect health.

In all these cases, Baba conferred worldly benefits, filled his visitors and devotees with gratitude and faith in himself and in God, strengthened their moral principles, and laid a good foundation* for a lofty spiritual superstructure.

* e.g., belief in the Law of Karma and the truth of reincarnation in accordance with one's karma.

VIII

JOURNEYS AND SOCIAL MATTERS

To persons unable to overcome their disbelief in special Providence, the best remedy is a study of the beneficence of God's agents or Avatars with the aid of credible and living witnesses. It is on such testimony* the following and most of the preceding passages are based.

Baba, especially after 1908, was in daily touch with hundreds or thousands. He would go to his *lendi* garden and spend an hour or two looking in each direction—evidently wanting to see where and how he should intervene with his help. His nights at the Masjid were spent in devotion to God and in watching service to see whom he was to help and how. He was watching at all other seasons, times and places also. But the above were specially set apart for undisturbed attention to that work. Nothing was too trivial for him to attend to, if it affected the welfare of those who had placed their trust in him.

Journeys.—With Baba's vast knowledge of the past, present and future, with his knowledge of men's minds everywhere, he could render invaluable

* That testimony is found in a companion volume entitled "Devotees' Experiences" and in several bigger books. It is not desirable to burden this small introduction with references to authority and discussion of the evidence. A larger book on Sai Baba by this author contains such reference, etc., and is under preparation.

aid to the devotees in their travels. That is what he did. Where there was risk, danger or needless trouble in the travel, he refused leave to go away from Shirdi or hedged it with conditions. Wise persons like Nana and Bere implicitly obeyed and benefitted by his wise guidance. But the unwise cared not for his words and suffered. One day when Bere, a Government Official and Das Ganu Maharaj wished to start from Shirdi, Baba gave them leave, but added a rider, that they should hurry up to the Kopergaon station and not halt anywhere. While they were doing so in a tonga, other tongawallas pointed out that there was ample time to catch the train and requested them to wait. They, however, drove on and came safe to the station. The later arriving tongas were no doubt in time to catch the train, but on their way, highway men caught them and caused considerable damage to persons and property.

Abdul Rangari visited Baba to get his wife cured of pain in the throat and stomach trouble, and as soon as these were cured, left Shirdi with his wife and child in a tonga, despite Baba's order that he should wait. His tonga was seriously damaged when half way up to the station and the poor man was stranded with his family on a lonely road in the middle of the night. Baba by his omniscience knew of his predicament and sent a tonga for him. An European gentleman came with the Nana Sahib Chandorkar's recommendation and Shama's inter-

cession to Baba and, after a few days stay, left Shirdi despite Baba's refusal of leave. When half way towards the station, the horses of his tonga took fright; the tonga was upset; and the poor man sustained severe injuries by his fall, in consequence of which he had to stay for a long time in the hospital.

• Devotees like Nana found that implicit obedience to Baba's orders even in matters of great official importance was the safest and wisest course. One day Nana had to meet his Collector and other officers at a camp and prayed for leave. Baba declined it. Nana Saheb courageously stayed away at Shirdi. The next day when he went to the camp with Baba's leave, he found that the previous day's meeting had been postponed by the Collector's wire. A pleader having to conduct an important case on a particular date at Pandharpur asked for Baba's leave to start so as to be there on that date. Baba refused the leave and gave it only for attendance on the following date. The lawyer who obeyed Baba found that the case had been postponed for one day during his absence, on the application of the other side.

Tatya Patel who was summoned to appear before a District Munsiff was stopped by Baba from starting. He sent up some excuse, and it was discovered that the court was closed on that day on account of the Munsiff's indisposition. H. S. Dixit was summoned twice or thrice to appear in the

High Court as a witness in a Will case but Baba did not permit him to go. His own side was even considering if a warrant should be taken. But on each of these occasions the Will case was not reached. And on the date it was actually reached, Baba had sent H. S. Dixit to Bombay and he was examined.

Mr. H. V. Sathe had a very important engagement to meet the Collector and his superior officers at a camp and wanted Baba's leave to start from Shirdi. Baba did not grant the leave. H. V. Sathe sent word through his father-in-law to Baba, that absence involved the risk of dismissal from service and other serious consequences. Baba ordered the father-in-law to lock up H. V. Sathe. For two days he was detained and he was fretting about the consequence. Going to camp on the third day, he discovered that all the original arrangements had been cancelled by the superior officers without intimation to him. Though *he* had no notice, Baba took notice of this and all other facts on his behalf, and saved him from the trouble of a useless journey. When ultimately Mr. Sathe realised this fact, his faith in Baba was further strengthened.

We may wind up this rather lengthy reference to Baba's temporal help with a few instances of marital problems. One Mr. (†. D). Vaidya, a devotee of Baba, was at his wit's end to find a match for his daughter. Baba appeared to him in a dream and showed him two boys and said that he need not

worry, as " Kesava Dixit's son " would be the match for his daughter. Mr. Vaidya's son to whom the dream was fully explained pointed out that one Dixit whose father was Kesav Dixit was in his office and had the features of one of the boys seen in the dream. On making due enquiries and starting the necessary negotiations, the match settled by Baba was soon an accomplished fact.

• Another devotee, Mr. G. G. Shiriyani, had come to an agreement with a friend in 1924, that the latter's son should marry his daughter. But as time passed, the friend's desire to have a large '*Karini*,' i.e., bridegroom's price overcame his respect for the oral pact and he resiled from it. G. G. S. was greatly pained and mortified, but had none to help him except Sai. To Sai he appealed ; and Sai definitely promised to get the identical boy for his son-in-law in the course of two years. The friend's plans and efforts for obtaining a high bridegroom price broke down and the friend's son raised objections to such efforts on grounds of conscience and policy alike. So the old pact was restored and the marriage was celebrated in two years as promised. G. G. Shiriyani never could doubt Baba's word and he was given further material to spread faith in Sai Baba as the ' Sheltering Rock of Ages ' that nothing can shake.

The next and last case is illustrative of the extent to which petted devotees might go. Baba

said to his devotees, that he as "the mother*" would never get angry with them, the children, while they as dearly loved and dearly loving children had the privilege of getting angry with him. Mrs. B. Chowhan, a deeply attached devotee, if not angry with Baba, came very near to the point of anger and once challenged his powers. In spite of her best efforts, her daughter remained a spinster; and one gentleman was hesitating in 1923, to send his final reply to settle the match, for nearly six months. She approached Baba's picture one night and addressed him thus, "Baba, you give experience of your miraculous powers to all. Why not give it to us? My daughter is still a spinster, and I am greatly worried over it. *If you have any power, then I must get a reply by to-morrow.*" That night she was blessed with a dream. She dreamed that the next morning's post brought the affirmative reply from the long hesitating party; and it did. The marriage was soon celebrated.

* In the daily prayers of the devotees, they address Sai, with gushing love and say repeatedly following B. G. IX 17.

(1) साइ नाथ गुरु माझे आई, मजला टाव दावा पायीं ।

*i.e., Sainath guru, mother mine !
Shelter me at Thy feet divine.*

(2) त्वमेव माता पिता त्वमेव ... मम देवदेव ॥ *i. e.,*

*Thou, God of Gods art father,
And Thou alone, my mother.*



Samadhi—Pooja



Baba's Portrait in the Dwaraka Mayee

FOREWORD

BY DEWAN BAHADUR K. SUNDARAM CHETTIAR,

RETD. HIGH COURT JUDGE

This book of my revered friend, Sri B. V. Narasimhaswami, would surely be an eye-opener to many a sceptic, blinded with a veil of materialism, and obsessed with a prejudice against the reality of anything which has not yet been stamped with the imprimatur of Modern Science. Sri Sai Baba's spiritual grandeur is disclosed in the thrilling account of His devotees' experiences, which the learned author has gathered with assiduous care, and made available for the general public. The testimony of so many devotees relating to the wonderful miracles performed by the Great Sage and Maha Siddha Purusha, which are all matters of their personal knowledge, should serve to dispel ignorance and doubt, and infuse faith and devotion in the mind of any reader. A great spiritual Alchemist as he was, Sri Sai Baba was able to transmute the lower self of his devotees mixed with the dross of the baser desires and passions, into the effulgence of the dormant higher self, by a purifying process of refinement in His mysterious crucible. He was doubtless a compassionate healer of the body as well as the soul.

Need I say under what a deep debt of gratitude the author has laid the public, who have the good fortune of reading this book? Sri Sai Baba, as one of the Saviours of humanity, showered His Grace on all those who sought for His blessings, with faith and devotion, and such Grace will also be shed on any one who now seeks for it in the proper way, as the author assures us in this book.

17-1-39.

PREFACE

This volume has been referred to in the "Introduction to Sai Baba," as furnishing part of the evidence on which the conclusions in that booklet are based. Besides strengthening the faith of the reader in the facts mentioned therein and in the nature of Sri Sai Baba and his methods these pages may furnish hints to the careful reader on other matters also. For instance, the first statement here, which is that of an esteemed friend, a High Court Judge still in active service, would help a reader who first approaches Baba to get into close, nay intimate touch with him and derive the fullest benefit therefrom—benefit greater perhaps, than that the Judge has derived. It is a matter of regret to this writer that he has to present that Judge to the readers under a pseudonym. But as that gentleman felt it delicate to have his experiences published broadcast over his real name, that feeling had to be respected. The only other pseudonym in this volume (Part I) is "Mrs. Manager." Indian readers would naturally expect and respect this feeling of delicacy in a lady at appearing before the public with her statement. The pseudonym given correctly indicates her status and that of her husband. These are regarded by all who know them as eminent devotees worthy of credit. The credentials of the other devotees whose statements

are given appear on the surface and need no comment. Prof. Narke is clear, guarded, yet emphatic in all that he says. Rao Bahadur S. B. Dhurnal, Mr. R. B. Purandhare and Mr. S. B. Nachne (who along with the Judge appear to be the most ardent among the lovers of Baba included in this part) have revealed the fact that they are constantly receiving Baba's help ever since they came under his care. An enthusiastic reader need not despair of achieving the same result for himself. Several Madrasee devotees who learnt of Baba within the last two years, *i.e.*, after this writer's articles appeared in the *Sunday Times*, Madras, (1936) have got into intimate touch with Sai Baba and are receiving his guidance and help, every day—nay every hour. The holy Swami Naraina Tirtha reveals how he was enabled by Baba to enjoy the mystic bliss of perceiving that all things are but his own self—that difference is really non-existent. The reader may be assured that such high advaitic flights are by no means confined to the older devotees that were privileged to see Baba in the flesh. The modern devotee can still derive similar and even higher benefits by concentrating his love on Baba. That Baba works greater wonders now than before his mahasamadhi may be illustrated by the following incident reported elsewhere by Sai's devotees. Dr. Rane, in spite of his English medical training and degrees, was helpless when his wife's skin was seriously discoloured by leprosy after Baba passed away. But he and his wife stayed at Shirdi for six months; and during that period she had her daily bath in

the Abhisheka water and used Baba's Udhi. Some improvement was noticed. Then the couple went to Bombay and continued the use of Baba's Udhi and Abhisheka Tirtha. In two years the natural colour of the skin was entirely restored and the cure was complete. This was years after Baba's mahasamadhi.

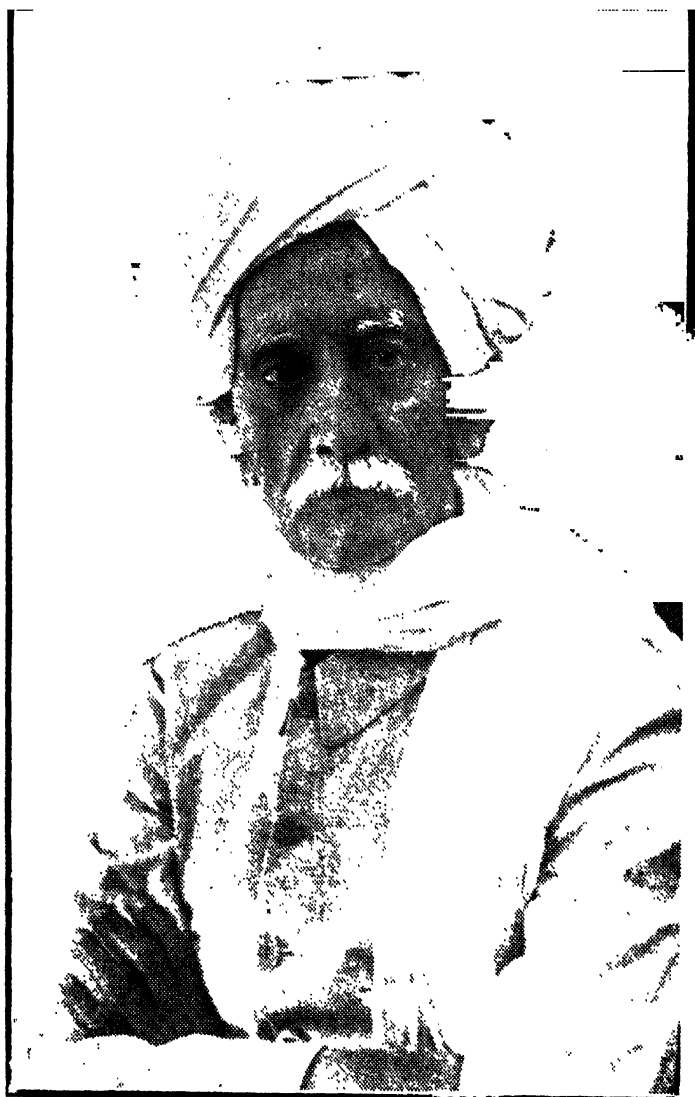
* The other statements in this part speak for themselves—and show how far Baba helped in overcoming the unfortunate differences between the two great communities of India. The case of Abdulla Jan who came from beyond the Himalayas, with the view that Indians—especially Hindus—are natural enemies and prey of stronger northern races and was so deeply changed by contact with Sai Baba as to regard Hindus as his brethren and internecine quarrels as destructive of the country's welfare is by no means a solitary exception but typical of whole groups. Communal clashes between these two faiths are unknown to Shirdi, where Hindus built Baba's mosque and tomb at which both communities pray or worship. A Brahmin devotee has constructed a mosque for his Moslem visitors at Sakori (3 miles from Shirdi) close to the Datta and Maruti temples there; and no disturbance of public tranquillity has occurred or is apprehended. Baba combining in himself all that is best in Hinduism and Islam and being revered by both communities is the ideal link between them—a link forged not from worldly materials but from the highest elements of human nature.

The last statements are typical of the fellow feeling of Baba (and of the devotees following his noble example) towards other faiths, *e.g.*, the Christian. The very few differences during Baba's long stay at Shirdi that are mentioned in statements I & IX are the exceptions which prove the general rule of harmony. These and other important points would be further brought out in the subsequent parts of Devotees' Experiences that will be issued hereafter.

In closing this preface, the writer must gratefully acknowledge the kindness of the numerous devotees that have disclosed their experiences to him. One of these devotees requires special mention, and that is Mr. P. R. Avesti, B.A., LL.B., formerly a Sessions Judge in Gwalior. But for his indefatigable exertions and great kindness in introducing this writer to scores of devotees, interpreting their statements when made in the vernacular and translating the vernacular books and documents about Sri Sai into English, this and other works on Sai could never have been written by this writer.



SAI BABA.



P. R. Avesti, B.A., LL.B.

DEVOTEES' EXPERIENCES

I

11th JUNE, 1936.

Chinna Kistna Rajasaheb Bahadur, B.A., LL.B.,
Saraswath, aged about 50, Interior of India, says :

I look upon Sri Sai Baba as the Creator, Preserver and Destroyer. I did so before his *mahasamadhi* in 1918 and I do so now. To me, he is not gone. He *is*, even now.

To me, he had no limitations. Of course, when he was with us, there was the fleshy tabernacle. That was prominently brought to our notice at times. But mostly the infinite aspect of His was what remained before me. I thought of him as a mental or *spiritual image*, in which *the finite and infinite blended very perfectly*—yet allowing the finite to appear before us at times. Now that the body has been cast off, the infinite alone remains, as 'Sai Baba.'

I am not after metaphysics and philosophical conundrums. Sai Baba occasionally talked in mystic language and used parables freely—which however, were construed in widely different ways by different listeners. Once he talked to me in the mystic way and asked me whether I understood him. I said 'No.' Others were present then. After they left, I told him that I did not grasp mystic utterances and that if he intended

that I should grasp anything he should speak to me in plain terms. After that he spoke to me only in plain words and not in parables.

A short account of myself is necessary to show how I came to Sai Baba and how he filled my life and became my all in all.

Our family God is Durga—Santa Durga of Goa—a Bhadra form and not a Rudra form. I used to worship her and pray that she might ever keep me happy. Later when I was about eight years old, I had my sacred thread initiation and learnt my *Gayatri* and *Sandhya*. These I had regard for. I was thus naturally led on from Durga to another form of God, *i.e.*, Narayana or Vishnu. Vishnu as pictured in “Dhruva-Narayana” made a deep impression on me; and I constantly meditated on that picture. When I concentrated or tried to concentrate on Vishnu, Dhruva’s figure frequently obtruded and so I cut off that portion of the picture and continued my meditation. I made a special appeal that in that blank space in the picture, (*i.e.*, in that vacancy) Vishnu should place me.

I had even as a boy practised Asana and Pranayama. I could pass one or two hours sitting in Padmasana or Siddhasana and concentrate for at least fifteen minutes, a single picture holding the entire field of my attention. I did all this without a Guru. I succeeded in Pranayama also to some extent.

In this way my meditation on Vishnu or Narayana was fairly intense. This continued till my twenty-first year. Then (*i. e.*, 1910?) one day, I was either sleeping and had dreams or I had trance visions—I cannot say what they were. But.

the following three experiences I had in the course of one night.

As I was in the lying posture on my bed, I felt a change. I was perceiving that the body lay separate and I was disengaged from it—disconnected or unconnected. I was different from the body ; and in front of me stood the figure of Vishnu-Narayana. This ended ; and about an hour later, a second incident followed.

Again my body lay there on the bed. I was outside it. Sri Vishnu Narayana was standing before me. And by his side stood another figure. Sri Vishnu addressed me and pointing to the other figure, said “This, Sai Baba of Shirdi, is your man ; you must resort to him.”

The third incident or vision followed soon after—after about the same interval perhaps.

I felt I was moving in some strange way. It was like levitation in the air. I came or was carried thus to a village. I found some one there and asked him what village that was. He said it was Shirdi. I asked him, “Is there any person named ‘Sai Baba’ here?” “Yes” he answered, “come and see.” I was taken to the mosque. There I saw Sai Baba. He was seated with legs outstretched. I went and reverently placed my head on his feet. He got up and said “Do you take *my* darsan ? I am *your debtor*, I must take your darsan,” and he placed his head on my feet. Then we parted.

These visions impressed me greatly. Before that time I had seen a picture of Sai Baba in the usual seated posture and I knew nothing more about him. I did not then know that Baba often sat with both legs outstretched.

Sometime later, I started on my first visit to Baba and Shirdi, and tried to verify my visions and to see if Sai Baba was my destined sole Guru as indicated in them.

When I went to Sai Baba at the mosque, there were many others with him. I went and prostrated, placing my head on his feet. He then said "What! Do you worship a man?" At once I retreated some distance and sat. I felt the rebuff very keenly. I had, it is true, my scholastic notions that men should not be worshipped; and I thought Sai Baba was hitting at me for going to him, with such notions lingering in my head. Between two stools I was coming to the ground. My scholastic idea of not worshipping any human being had been undermined and practically sacrificed; but I had not been accepted as a devotee by the Guru as I expected—from my visions. I felt deeply mortified and continued to sit for some hours. Then all had cleared off, leaving Baba alone on the floor of the mosque. That was in the afternoon. It was believed that none should go to Baba at that time, lest any serious harm should be inflicted as a penalty for the intrusion. But in my state of mind, such harm did not deter me. The main or single hope with which I had gone to Shirdi seemed to be blasted. What more was there to fear? He might beat me and crack my skull! Let him. With such ideas, I went nearer and nearer to the place where Baba sat. While I was some yards off, Baba gently beckoned to me to approach him. Thus encouraged I went and placed my head on his feet. He at once hugged me, bade me sit close to him, and thus addressed me. "*You are my child.* When others, *i. e.*, strangers are in the company, we keep

the children off." My apparent rejection or expulsion earlier in the day having been thus satisfactorily explained, I felt the full force of his deep and intense love for me and my heart responded to it. There was my Saviour, my Guru—the man of my destiny, found at last.

Baba told me to go and put up with "Ayi", "Ramakrishni" as he called her. I went up. Ever since that date, up to the end of her life, whenever I went to Shirdi, Ayi's was my residence. And except to go to Sai Baba, I would never leave Ayi's residence while I was at Shirdi.

Ayi was a noble and affectionate person—an 'Ayi' or mother indeed. She was from the very first treated by me as my mother and she loved me as if I was her son. She used to get a *roti* (bread) from Baba as *prasad*—on which alone she was living; and Baba used to send her an additional *roti* for me. Sometimes the extra *roti* received at Ayi's would indicate to her that I was on the way to Shirdi and would soon arrive.

Ayi's devotion to Sai Baba was very intense and passionate. *She lived only for Sai Baba*, and her delight was to carry out everything that he wanted or was needed for his *samasthan*, i.e., institution and devotees.

I find that Baba's instruction and help to me came through Ayi, in a peculiar way. Ayi was so open hearted and kind that from the first day I could confide all my views and plans to her; and she revealed her ideas and plans to me. As for religious progress, she said that we should so act that no other persons should guess what we were doing and how we were getting on. *Secrecy* is essential for the success or perfect fruition of

spiritual effort. This was, of course, Baba's practice and precept*.

As for religious exercise, Ayi was an excellent singer with a divinely charming voice and a good knowledge of music. She could play on the Sittar also. I had a good ear for music and I easily attained *manolaya*†. I was rapt in the music when I listened to it. But as we went on, one day we talked about what form our religious exercise should take. Songs and hymns were good in their way, but they attracted attention of the outside public too much, and were not in any case sufficient for our onward course. Then we agreed that *Japa* was the proper step for us. What particular name should be used by us for *Japa*, was the important question. She said that many used the name of Vittal, Ram, etc., but that so far as she was concerned, "Sai" was her God and that name was sufficient for her, while I might go on with the name of Vittal, etc., if I chose. I replied that I had not seen Vittal; and what was good for her was good for me, and that I also would go on taking Sai's name. So we sat on, facing each other and repeating to ourselves our chosen (guru God's) name,—for about an hour. Later in the day, Sai Baba sent for me and asked me what I had been doing in the morning. "Japa," I said. "Of what name?" he asked. "Of my God" I replied. "What is your God?" was Sai Baba's next query. I simply

* जिन्हे कमाया उने छुपाया.—Kabir.

† i.e., absorption or infused contemplation. This devotee has also stated that Baba had musical gifts and musical appreciation—especially of Bhajana Kirtans, that Baba sent for him at midnight, and made him sing and corrected mistakes in "Ragas" and gave him some musical tips and that Baba himself sang with a charming voice.

replied, "You know it," and he smiled and said "*That is right.*" Thus this Japa was really the Japa that he expressly approved and had perhaps silently started through Ayi—unperceived by either Ayi or myself.

Japa being the Sadhana approved of (in my case), the question may be put—what is the *Sadhya* (साध्य) or goal that Sai Baba approved of—as the goal of life? What should a man aim at and reach as the end of his life?

Just as the Sadhana was indirectly started by Baba, the Sadhya or goal, also was indirectly revealed; it was patent from all he said and did. It was *through love*, to *reach God*, (in any form, *especially in the beloved form of the loving Guru*) and **intensely, nay passionately**, to *love him*. This is what we did and, what he made us do, *i. e.*, what he enabled or drew us to do by his own intense and wonderful love for us.

Some may set a great store by *Sakshatkara* or revelation in physical form of the object of worship, as the be-all and end-all of all religion. But I do not. As I intently meditated on Baba, *I had Baba's vision* at the meditation. I, however, treated that appearance as a matter of secondary or minor importance. I did not want Baba to be outside of me. I said to Baba that I wanted him to come in and *be me*. What I mean by "me" is this. The self (*i. e.*, "I") is compounded of two substances—one the gross body and the other, the finer or subtler. In the finer, we have the baser element or part, and the nobler or higher. Our self, God Vittal and other entities are all the reflections of the Real; and so I should rise up to be Vittal or Sai; Vittal or Sai should come into me

and take the place of my higher part. That is what I wanted to arrive at—and so was not satisfied with seeing Sai Baba as external to me in my meditation or contemplation.

I have not regularly studied even Gita up to this time. I did not care for spiritual study in my earlier days either; and so I do not go into much detail on the question of the exact description of the further stages or final stage of meditation.

One Guru-poornima day, numerous devotees came to Sai Baba, and as usual, placed a book before him so that he might return it with his *Asirvada* or blessing for them to study it with profit and benefit. Sai Baba, however, took up a book brought by one man and gave it to another, as he often does. On that occasion every one had a book in hand, except myself. Baba then looked at me and said pointing to the books:—"In these books, they want to find God ब्रह्म Brahma. There is however, भ्रम Bhrama, *i.e.*, whirl, confusion or delusion in these books. *You are alright. Do not read books—but keep me in your heart.* If you unify (or harmonise) head and heart, that is enough."

So I have not been indulging in any regular study of religious books. I content myself with what has led me so far; (and with what has been achieved).

Some of my experiences bear upon the question what I should do?

Though I have been intensely loving Sri Sai, I have not been able at times to do as good service to Baba as others do.

It was probably in 1912 that I went up to Shirdi on some festive occasion (Guru Purnima?).

I saw the devotees at Manmad having each a grand basket with flower garlands, etc. I was much pained to note that I had forgotten to take a flower garland when I was going to my Guru, who was everything to me. We all went to Shirdi and at the mosque, I found Baba was under a great weight of flower garlands and it pained me again that I had not a garland to give him. Baba lifted up a bundle of the garlands with his hand and said "*All these are yours.*" How kind of Baba ! What love was his to me ! All forgiving, all forgetting love.

About the same year 1912, I had taken Rs. 100 with me to Shirdi in my pocket. Sai Baba asked me for dakshina (Rs. 40). I readily gave it. A little later he asked for another 40 rupees and that too was given with equal readiness and joy. Finally he asked me for the remaining 20 and that also I gave him. I was happy to give him all that—though I was left without a pie in the result. Then again Baba sent for me and asked me for dakshina. I said I had nothing to give. Then he suggested that I should go and get money from some others. I agreed but told Baba that if he should indicate whom I was to go to, I would gladly go and ask him. Baba said "Go to Shama." I went to Mr. Madhav Rao Deshpande (Shama) and told him what took place and asked him for money. He replied that I had not understood Baba aright. "Does Baba care a rap for your rupees ?" he said. "No, what he wants is your mind and heart, your time and soul to be devoted to him. That is his meaning." I went back to Baba and reported what Shama had said. Then Baba smiled and said, "Go to Dixit and ask him." I went to Mr. Dixit and told him of what Baba had bidden me do. He then replied that Baba's

direction to me had to be understood in the circumstances as a lesson to me that I should not feel absence of money or the begging for money or for anything else to be a humiliation, and that I should not esteem myself to be above begging. I went back and reported Dixit's reply to Baba. He smiled and then asked me to go to Nana Saheb Chandorkar and ask him for a loan. I went to Khandoba's temple where Nana Saheb Chandorkar was reading some religious books with the learned K. Upasani Sastri. I went and told Nana Saheb all that had occurred and Baba's order that I should approach him for money. Nana Saheb at once showed his worldly wisdom. He said that he knew how delicate the situation was when Baba asked for *dakshina* and there was nothing to be given to him to satisfy him and that I should learn his plans and ways. "Whenever I go to Shirdi," he said, "I start with a certain sum, and leave a half at Kopergaon, *e. g.*, on this occasion I came with Rs. 200, out of which I have left Rs. 100 at Kopergaon and come down to Shirdi with only Rs. 100. It is very painful to say 'No' when Baba asks for money. So I go on giving *dakshina* out of the stock in hand to Baba and when it is exhausted, I send for the reserve at Kopergaon. You must act like this." I went back to Baba and then told him what Nana said. While I sat there, Baba sent for Nana and asked him for *dakshina*—Rs. 40. He paid it and went away. Again he sent for him and asked for Rs. 40 more. That was paid and again Nana was sent for and the last amount was paid up and at once he sent some one to Kopergaon for his reserve fund. Then Baba at once wanted more. Nana felt humiliated at having to say 'No,' as there was no time for the

Kopergaon reserve to arrive. The lesson that was then taught to him, to me, and to all was that it was *presumption* on the part of any one to think that he himself was the great Providence supplying the needs of Baba, or that any one could supply all that Baba might ask for.

Thus Baba showed me how differently the demand for *dakshina* was *interpreted* by devotees. The real explanation of Baba's demand in this case was not what Shama, Dixit or Nana said it was. It was evidently to teach lessons to me, Nana, etc.

Baba really cared nothing for money or for presents. What he really wanted was, love, deep intense, passionate, wholehearted love.

To give him that was my aim. He knew it and read it in my heart and responded to it—as only he could respond.

It was probably in 1915 Ramanavami, when intending to go to Shirdi, I went into the Indore cloth bazar to fix upon a present—worthy of being presented to Baba. I found a fine lace embroidered muslin of the Dacca type, produced at Chander. It was some 5 feet square with embroidered body and 8 or 9 inches of lace border all round. It was very nice and worth the 85 rupees I paid for it. It could be folded into 6" x 6" x 1" packet. I took it with me to Shirdi and kept it inside my shirt. Devotees usually go and present Baba with cloth in order that the same may be returned to them with Baba's blessings; and the same is returned to them. In my case, I had made up my mind that if Baba cared for my love (which knew no difference between him and me) he should not return the same to me but should retain it and wear it.

When each devotee went and presented his cloth, it would be openly bestowed and placed on Baba and then at the end, the attendants would call out, "Whose is this?" and return it. In order to avoid the return, I had taken my tiny packet and when I bowed to Baba, I slyly shoved the packet under his mattress (gadi). When all clothes were taken and returned, none noticed what was beneath the gadi. Baba then got up and said "Clear off all that lies on the gadi and dust it." When the mattress was removed, there was the muslin packet. Baba picked it up and said "Hallo. What is this? Muslin!" and spread it out and said "*I am not going to return this. This is mine.*" He then put it round his body and said to me "Don't I look nice in this?" I was immensely happy, as his loving heart had fulfilled my request for the acceptance and retention of that present—as an index of the fact that I was not different from him—that *I and he were one*. I was not different from him. I and he were really one.

Our unity was expressly granted, in another way and at another time by Baba—about the same year.

I had gone to Shirdi and was staying as usual at Ayi's. In the afternoon, when Baba was alone, he sent some one to fetch me and after dismissing the messenger from his presence, he was very kind to me, made me sit close to him, embraced me, and said "*The key of my treasury is now placed in your hands. Ask anything you want, e. g., Rs. 5 or Rs. 100 a month—or what you like, and I will give it to you.*" I felt at once that this was a temptation—and declined to ask for anything. Sai Baba knew what was necessary, good or useful for

me and it was for him to decide and give or withhold. It was not for me to ask. Seeing my disinclination to ask, he held me by the chin and coaxed me into asking him for something. Then I asked, "Is it agreed Baba, that you will grant anything I ask for?" "Yes" was his answer. "Then Baba," I replied, "I want this. *In this and in any future birth that may befall me, you should never part from me. You should always be with me.*" And he patted me joyously and said, "Yes. *I shall be with you, inside you, and outside you, whatever you may be or do.*" I was supremely happy.

I feel that he is always with me. *At times, he visibly shows his form to reassure me or guide me.*

Many years later, I lost a child in a building which had numerous occupants. My wife was greatly depressed and started weeping. I assured her that Baba did only what was good for us and had taken away the child and so we should not weep and attract a crowd. I asked her to sleep till morning—when the funeral would take place. She could not bear the sight of the corpse, and so I took it on myself and she went to lie down. Then when I had the corpse on my lap, Baba appeared to me, took me out and said "*Do you want me or the dead child? Choose. You cannot have both. If you want me to revive the child, I will; but then you will have me no more with you. If you do not want revival, you will have many children in due course.*" I had no hesitation in telling him that I wanted him. "**Then do not grieve**" he said and vanished.

It is thus he encourages me, when the occasion needs it, even by his presence.

All my needs are met by Baba's grace. *I do not trouble him with prayers for my worldly gains or support.* I have my income and property and insurance and I am content with the provision for the present and future. If any need arise, I find that somehow the money comes up. I have nothing to complain of.

Finally if I am asked what I would suggest to one who wished to find out how he (not having met Sai Baba in the flesh) could make himself a devotee of Sai Baba and get his help, my answer will be that he should *sit* wholeheartedly *and try to pour his heart in love to Sai Baba.* It is not essential that he should go to Shirdi for that purpose—though Shirdi associations are undoubtedly helpful. All that he should do is to transcend the senses and concentrate with love on Sai Baba. He would surely reach and obtain the help of Sai Baba—to obtain all that he is fit to achieve or receive.

Baba does not prescribe one uniform spiritual exercise or practice for all. He suits himself to the stage, circumstances and conditions of each—"If you are a Rama Bhakta, keep to Rama. If you want only Allah, keep to Allah," is his advice. He is always impartial.

Sometimes he pronounced or got some to pronounce '*fatihā*' over Hindu offerings also. There was—as a rule—no sharp distinction or antagonism between Hindus' devotion to him, and Mahommedans' devotion to him. There were however, some exceptions. One, I will mention. There were two "Rohillas" about 1916 who came to Shirdi and became devoted to Sai Baba. The elder one was constantly with Baba and used to read the Koran, at night especially, sitting at the

feet of Baba. He declared that Baba was Paygambar (*i.e.*, God) and showed him great reverence. At times, he said that Baba (though he was Paygambar) was still teaching heterodox doctrine. Baba's allowing the din of noon-day Arati with its music in the mosque, allowing himself to be worshipped as God there, and partaking of food offered to idols were heterodox ; and this Rohilla mentioned his objections to Baba. But Baba only smiled and said "*All that (i.e., other Gods) is Allah.*" This was one of Baba's moods. In some moods, he would say "We are all the *creatures* of God 'Allah.' In other moods, he would say *I am God.*"

This, of course, was extreme heterodoxy in this Rohilla's view. So this Rohilla one day declared that, although Sai Baba was Paygambar, yet his doctrine was wrong and so he (the Rohilla) would make short work of him and his Doctrine. One day, as Sai Baba was going out walking, the Rohilla came up from behind, with a stout club in his right hand and reached striking distance. Baba turned towards him and touching or seizing his left wrist cast a glance at him, beneath which the poor Rohilla cowered and sank like a lump of lead,—powerless to lift his club or even to lift himself. Baba left him there and went away. Later the man had to be raised up with some one's help. In a few days the man took leave of Baba and left Shirdi for good—never to return.

The other Rohilla was not intolerant but was rendering humble service in the Samasthan.

As for intolerance, that was not confined to this Muslim devotee. There were some Hindu devotees who exhibited this feature. But Baba invariably discountenanced it, in every case.

It is neither necessary nor possible nor desirable to narrate all the experiences I had with Baba or in reference to Baba. Baba's kindness and provision for my welfare knew no limits. His methods of help were various and depended on the nature of the devotee concerned and the attendant circumstances. In my case I had experience of all forms of his help. The first method of help is this: (1) When we are in difficulties or when Baba wants us to take a particular course, the inspiration comes to us that that course should be adopted and we have also the feeling that the inspiration comes from Baba. If I am wanted at a very extraordinary time to go to Baba for private and solitary communion, the call within is enough to indicate it. This first method relates to inspirations when we are awake. (2) The second method is to give the suggestion or indication or idea, in dreams, or trances—sometimes through Baba's personal appearance. This, of course, is the most impressive and unmistakable method. (3) A third method is where *Baba directs us to go to some third person* for a solution or hint. Sometimes it happens that the third person is totally unfit even to understand the difficulty or the solution. Yet all the same, the solution is given by that man without knowing what the problem is and what the solution and how he is benefitting us. He is a mere peg to hang the solution on. Baba has helped me in all these and other ways—and given me valuable training alike when he was in the body and after he left it. I regard Sri Sai Baba as the same spirit as Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa and one instance of the help he has given me recently—through this perception of identity may be mentioned.

Some eight years back I went to Dakshineswar to see the places and things of interest. I got the service of a local man to act as my cicerone and he showed me the Kali figure that Paramahansa worshipped and other images. I looked at Kali standing outside the worship room and passed on. I was anxious to see the tiny image of Ramlal that sported as a living boy with Paramahansa, and told my guide to show me Ramlal. He took me to one of the temples and showed me a huge image and said "This is Ramlal." I said it could not be. The man replied that he as the local man should know and that I, as a stranger, could not possibly be better informed. I had to apologise and I wondered what to think of the 'Ramlal,' I had read about in Paramahansa's life. Just at this juncture, a *pujari* of these temples came and inquired if I was from Deccan. I replied I was. Then he said he would show me round Kali and every other image at close quarters and with full detail. I said I had just seen them. Then he insisted on my visiting them again. He did not want any money from me. The reason for his persistent request was that he had been instructed in a dream overnight that a devotee from Deccan would be coming on the following day and that he was to take him to all the images and help him to worship them. Thus assured, I followed him. He took me inside the Garbhagraha, the holy of holies of Kali and said I was free to touch the image and worship as I liked. Next he said that he would show me Ramlal. I said I had been shown a huge figure as Ramlal by my guide. The *pujari* rated my cicerone for deceiving me and then took up the tiny image of Ramlal that Paramahansa had played with and placed it on my lap.

Thus all my expectations were fulfilled beyond measure—all through the grace of Sai who is no other than Ramakrishna.

The great favour Sainath had conferred on me by taking me so close to him and loving me and by my loving him, had its reflections in the way in which some eminent living saints treated me.

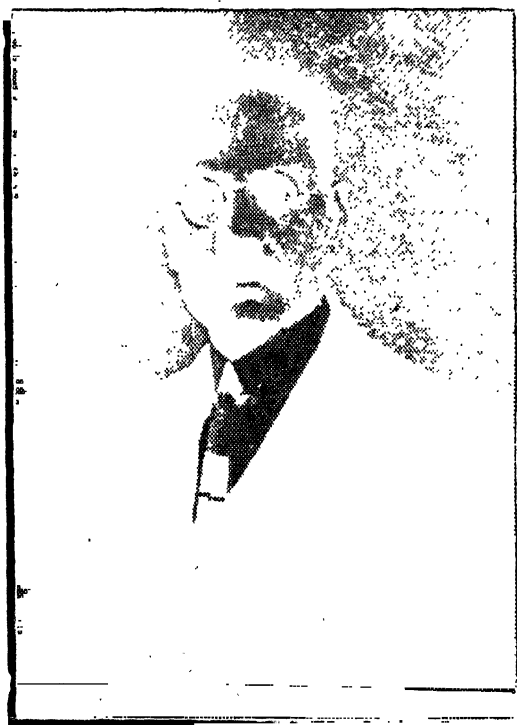
Madhava Nath Maharaj often seen at Poona and elsewhere (who passed away a month or two back) was seen by me in 1927. Maharaj without being told of me, spotted out my connection with Sai and said I was Sai Baba's man. He narrated to me the exact words that passed between me and Baba at our first interview; and he added that he was then present,—*i.e.*, of course in invisible spirit form, or as Sai Baba.

II

10th, 20th, 25th, 28th, MAY, 1936.

Professor G. G. Narke, M.A., (Cal.) M.Sc. (Manch), Professor of Geology & Chemistry in College of Engineering, Deccan Gymkhana, age 53, Brahmin, Poona, says :

Experiences with saints and progress in one's spiritual affairs cannot be revealed. According to the (hackneyed) saying of Kabir जिन्नेपाया उन्नेछुपाया ; 'What one has got, he keeps secret.' This has been the strict injunction of my teacher Sri Sai Baba. The mouth instinctively closes when I try to mention my experiences. I can and may give some superficial account of occurrences and things concerning Sai Baba. These are well-known and no



Prof. G. G. Narke, M.A., M.Sc.



Middle Row:—1. Dr. C. Pillai. 2. Shama's Brother. 3. Shama. 4. Tatyapa Patel. 5. Sadu Bayya.

rule of secrecy is violated thereby. But they are chaff and hardly worth any trouble to write or talk about. Yet as you are keen after any bit of information, I shall mention some of such facts. Of course, the deepest experience one has is incapable of utterance, apart from any question of rules of secrecy.

In the first place, you see I have placed Sai Baba amongst the house-hold gods we worship daily at home. *Sai Baba is God*—not an ordinary Satpurusha. The divine gleam in Sai's eyes denotes that he is the *Satpurusha*. His powers and actions were wonderful.

I will give a chronological account of my spiritual leanings and how I came into contact with Sai Baba.

My early surroundings promoted faith in Sai Baba. My father-in-law, Mr. Buty, my wife and my mother were all great devotees of Sai Baba and worshipped him as God. I used to read Jnaneshwari and other works which deal with greatness of Satpurushas.

In 1907-9 I was at Calcutta and was trained in Geological survey and (as a scholar from C. P.) I had got my M. A. in 1905. I was sent in 1909 as a State Scholar of Govt. of India to Manchester where I stayed till 1912 and got my M. Sc. in Geology and Mining. I came back in August 1912.

My wife, mother and my father-in-law were often at Shirdi and they wrote to me to go over to Shirdi to pay my respects to Sai Baba. I wrote back to say that I would go, "*if Baba wanted me.*" My father-in-law then asked Baba and wrote to me that Baba wanted me. So I went to Shirdi in April 1913. Baba was very kind to my relations.

He would jump up (occasionally) and play a jig, as it were, before my mother, showing how happy he was to see my mother.

Mr. Madhava Rao Deshpande went with me and introduced me for the first time to Sai Baba. Baba replied "You introduce him to me! *I have known him for thirty generations (पीढी).*" What wonderful knowledge of the past was this!

The first impression I got of Sai Baba was from *his eyes*. They *pierced me through and through*. And his image as seated at the Chavadi has left an indelible impression on my heart. As for the inner experiences, they gradually grew upon me.

First, I fell in with the current and did my *Seva* (*i e.*, service) to Baba and attended the Aratis, etc.

At an Arati, in my early visit Sai Baba was in a towering passion. He fumed, cursed and threatened for no visible cause. I doubted if he was a madman. That was a passing thought. The Arati was completed in the usual way. In the afternoon (of that day), I went and massaged his feet and legs. Then he stroked my head and said "*I am not mad.*" Lo! He is seeing my heart. Nothing is concealed from Him. **He is my Antaryami—the inner Soul of my soul,**" I thought. Thenceforward, numerous instances occurred in my own experience of his *Antaryamitwa*. When he talked, *he spoke as one seated in my heart*, knowing all its thoughts, all its wishes, etc. *This is God within. I had no hesitation in deciding that he was God.* I tested him at times. Each test produced the same conviction that he was all knowing, all seeing and able to mould all

things to his will. A few instances out of hundreds may be cited here which showed that *nothing was beyond him or concealed from him, in the past present and future.*

In 1913, Baba told me that my *father-in-law would build a Dagdiwada*, (*i.e.*, a stone edifice) at Shirdi and that *I would be in charge of it.* It was only in 1915-16 that my father-in-law began to build it, (*i.e.*, the building in which Baba's tomb is erected) and it was after 1918-19, I was one of the Trustees in charge of that tomb.

My mother was anxious about my *employment.* I was ever tossing from place to place and often had periods of unemployment. I was trained in England as a Geologist, Mining Engineer; and here in India I was on the look out for prospecting jobs advertised in the press and took up one job after another finishing each in a short time. My first stay at Shirdi was only for three or four days and I then went back to Balaghat and Burma. After three months my work under B. O. C. ceased, and I went back to Nagpur and thence to Shirdi and stayed four months there with my wife and went back to Nagpur. Again as I got a letter from Madhava Rao that Baba wanted me, I went to Shirdi alone and stayed *thirteen months.* I was without employment and I did not care. Sometimes, I had stray fancies that a fakir's life was good for me.

It was a day in 1914. Baba had got ready a number of *Kupnis* (somewhat like gowns or togas which are worn by fakirs) and presented a number of people with them. I was watching the distribution from a distance and hoped that one might be conferred on me—to be kept with me and worn

on special occasions, *e.g.*, Bhajans in honour of Sai Baba. Baba stopped distribution even when many Kupnis still remained with him. He beckoned to me a little later and placing his hand kindly on my head, stroked it and said "*Do not blame me for not giving you a Kupni. That Fakir (meaning evidently God) has not permitted me to give you one.*"

My relations were asking Baba what was to become of me, seeing that I had such an unsettled course of life. My mother also saw that I went up to distant places like Calcutta and Burma for prospecting jobs and prayed to Baba that I should be provided by his grace with good employment nearer home or Shirdi. Baba answered and told them "*I will settle him at Poona.*" I got sometimes a number of jobs at the same time and I had to choose. I went to Baba each time, relying wholly on his foresight and all seeing wisdom to guide me. I had as great a reliance on him as a sucking babe on its mother. His choice was often times strange. When there was once a choice between Calcutta and (the more distant) Burma, he chose the latter. He always would say "*Go to Burma and Poona*" or "*go to such and such a place and Poona*"—adding Poona every time he made the selection.

In 1916, I had to choose between an offer from Benares of a Professorship and a prospecting job at Burma. Baba told me "*Go to Burma and Poona.*" I always laughed within myself at the addition of Poona, as I was a Mining Engineer and Poona held no prospects for me. Even in 1913, Baba was seeing my present permanent appointment as Professor of Geology and Chemistry in

Poona which I have held since 1918. *The entire future of my career was but present to him.*

About 1916, I returned to Shirdi after a long spell of absence. I enquired, as soon as I arrived, who were doing what service to Baba. I was told, Vaman Rao Patel, B.A., LL.B., was doing the service of begging food in the village on behalf of Baba, and I felt a bit jealous. "If that is so why should I not be given that work," I thought to myself, but said nothing. It was then *Darshan* time and I had no time to undress. I went in my full suit, boot, trousers, coat and hat, to Baba's Masjid. Baba was being asked three times permission to send Vaman Rao with the begging bowl. Suddenly he pointed to me and said "Let this man go and beg for food with that bowl to-day." I went in full suit that day and begged. Later for four months I went begging at noon for Baba's sake, *i.e.*, for food for Baba in my ordinary costume. People could not understand why I was chosen for this office. But since I had that desire, Baba as my innermost soul, *my Antaryami*, noticed it and gave me the opportunity of serving him in that way. This honour of begging for food on his behalf at noon time was reserved by Baba for very few.

It was in 1917 that the announcement was made that a Professor of Geology for the College of Engineering at Poona was wanted. I asked Baba if I should apply for the post. He said 'yes' and I went to Poona, to see all people concerned. It was a hard and uphill work, as the applicants for the post were many and were supported by various influential persons. After I left Shirdi, Baba inquired of the men there "Where is Narke

gone?" They told him "He has gone to Poona, to try for the appointment." "*Allah will bless*" was Baba's remark. He then asked whether I had any children and was informed that several were born but none survived (they died after a very short life). "*Allah will bless*" was again his remark. I secured the appointment in 1918 and was made permanent in 1919; and children born to me since then are not short-lived. I have four sons now. All these are evidently secured by Baba's grace.

So much can be easily said of Sai Baba by all—mere observers from outside. But he who judged of Baba by the outside alone would be greatly mistaken in his estimate. Baba was, of course, adapting himself to the capacity of people that resorted to him for help and protection. Most of them were superficial people—seeking mostly some material gain or advantage; and to them he did not reveal not his inner nature. But when anyone capable of diving deeper came to him he revealed more of himself and his powers. I was keenly observing him from the first and he noticed it and encouraged my habit of observing and judging—by complimenting me as "Hushiar" or "clever." On occasions, he told me "what a 'Dubya,' i.e., sluggard you are"—evidently referring to my failure to penetrate beneath the surface of things on those occasions. Baba was not the man to stifle legitimate inquiry. Everything he did or said was full of significance; mostly I could understand them.

To one deeply observing him, the startling fact came out into greater and greater prominence that **Baba was living and operating in other worlds**

also, besides this world and in an invisible body.

Remarks made by him openly would be treated as meaningless ranting by those who did not know him. His language also was highly cryptic—full of symbology, parable, allegory and metaphor. Literal interpretations of them would be made by superficial people—who would then conclude that Baba was a worldly man amongst worldly men, and a very avaricious man at that. For instance, a man came to Baba and watched him for a time; and I asked him what impression he formed of Baba. His answer was “I never saw any saint talking of money all the hours of the day” and he felt disappointed. This man did not know that “*Paica*”—money, was used by Baba to denote *Punya*, *Apurva* or merit, very often. But on a careful observation and analysis of his talks, one must conclude that his nature, powers and functions were very great and that the way in which people could benefit by his guidance and help would also be peculiar.

4th JUNE, 1936.

In 1914 or thereabouts, a rich old gentleman of Harda came with a lady to Shirdi. He was suffering from T. B., *i. e.*, consumption. During the space of one month, there was noticeable improvement in his health. So he made Shirdi his residence. At the end of the second month, he grew worse and his end seemed to be approaching. One day the ladies of his house and their friends told me that his condition was critical and there was no senior male to go and ask Baba for help—and sent me to ask Baba for his Udhi. I went up. Baba told me that the man would be better for quitting this earth. “What can the Udhi

do? Anyhow take the Udhi and give it, as it is wanted," he said. So I took and gave the Udhi but, of course, refrained from intimating Baba's words to anyone. The condition grew worse. Then Shama, (*i. e.*, Madhavarao Deshpande) arrived and went to Baba and told him of the imminent death. Baba appears to have said "*How can he die? In the morning he will come to life.*" This was taken to mean that the old man would not quit the earth. So they placed lamps all round the corpse and waited till noon. Life was not restored to the corpse. Funeral ceremonies followed. The Harda gentleman's relations thought that Baba had given false hopes and went away from Shirdi. For three years they did not return to Shirdi. Then one day, a relative of the deceased saw Baba in a dream, with the deceased's head over his own (*i. e.* Baba's) and Baba disclosed the lungs—in a rotten state, and said "From the torture of all this, I have saved him." Thereafter, he and his relations renewed their visits to Shirdi. Baba's words "How can he die? He will come to life" evidently referred to survival of human personality and taking up new forms of life.

Baba was frequently talking of his travels with an invisible body across great distances of space (and time). In the mornings, sitting near his *dhuni* (fire) with several devotees, he would say to what distant place he went overnight and what he had done. Those who had slept by his side the whole night at the Masjid or Chavadi knew that his physical body was at Shirdi all the night. But his statements were literally true and were occasionally verified and found to be true. He had travelled to distant places in an invisible,

i. e., spirit form and rendered help there. Again he would frequently talk of *post mortem* experiences.

A Shirdi Marwadi's boy fell ill and died. People returned from the funeral to the Masjid with gloomy faces. Sai Baba then said of that boy "*He must be nearing the river now, just crossing it.*" I felt that the reference could only be to *Vaitarini* (Styx).

He told several people of their *past lives* and the events therein. He told me the facts of four previous lives of mine. He spoke this in the presence of others. But others did not and could not understand that it referred to me. He had the peculiar art of giving information to particular individuals in the midst of a group, in a way that they (those concerned) alone could understand, and not the other members of the group. Strangely enough, at one sitting by a few acts, words, etc., he could and did benefit numerous persons.'

This power to travel in invisible body to distant parts of this world, to traverse other realms than the earth life and note or control what takes place there, and to see the past and future alike revealed one great fact about his nature. Some of his own observations also brought that out clearly.

Sai Baba occasionally asked (I heard it myself) "*Where are you? Where am I? Where is this world?*" Occasionally he declared, pointing to his body or touching it and referring to it as "*this my house,*" "*I am not here. My Guru Mowrshad has taken me away.*" As even in the flesh—in this earth life, he was not confined to his physical body, it may be truly said of him "*Sai Baba is alive.*"

He is where he was then. Even then he was where he is now."

He also made occasional reference to what his function is and was in this terrestrial sphere and in other worlds. He several times referred to his *control of the destinies of departed souls*—indicating thereby his function in the Cosmic Order. Sai Baba never spoke untruth, never spoke meaningless jargon. But only those who were familiar with his ways could make out the meaning of what he said or did—when they were intended for their understanding.

UPADESA, MANTRA, TANTRA, ETC.

Sai Baba never gave me any mantra, tantra or Upadesa—And so far as I know, he gave these to none. Madhavrao Deshpande has told me of the following incident.

Radhabai Deshmukhin was at Shirdi waiting for a time on Baba and she wanted Upadesa. Finding that he gave her none, she started Satyagraha. She stopped taking food and was determined to be without food until Sai Baba should give her Upadesa. On the fourth day of the fast, Madhavrao taking pity on her condition went and told Sai Baba of it and requested him to pronounce the name of some God, so that she might take it as her *mantropadesa* for Japa. Baba then sent for her and told her that giving Upadesa was not in his line, that he following his Guru had different traditions, that his Guru was so powerful that he trembled to go and stand before him, and that the help given by the Guru was invisible and secret and not by aural instruction.

मी कानाला इसणारा गुरु नव्हे :—*I do not instruct through the ear.*

आमाचा घराणें निराळा आहे :—*Our traditions are different.*

was what he said.

Sai Baba never* lectured, nor discoursed systematically as others do. He gave hints—very pregnant hints. A word or a sentence or two at a time was all he cared to utter. But from them an observant devotee could build up his own system, lecture or philosophy. It is difficult therefore to be dogmatic if one is asked what are Sai Baba's aims, methods, etc.? But stray hints were forthcoming.

AIM IN LIFE OR PURUSHARTHA

Did Sai Baba ask people to aim at Moksha? Did he advocate Viveka and Vairagya? Never have I heard that from his lips.

Reaching God is the aim. That was the way he put it.

अट्टा मिळणार सप्तसमुद्र निहाल करणाः

i.e., Reaching God, Crossing or traversing all the Oceans and Worlds.

वेडा पार करना :—*Getting beyond chains (or limits).*

He never (so far as I know) spoke of माया—(Maya) (or the theory that all existence in the sublunary sphere is mere illusion) to my knowledge. He took the commonsense view that this world and the worlds beyond are real, and that we have to make the best of them, here and hereafter.

* *i. e.*, after 1913.

KARMA AND REINCARNATION

were frequently referred to by him.

"We must *sow good to reap good* (results) in this life and the next" was the truth that underlay many of the stories he told. He frequently referred to past lives of others and occasionally referred to the future life of some.

No one moving with him could have even a momentary doubt about *post mortem* existence and the existence of other worlds than this, wherein rewards and punishments for acts done here would be reaped. These are Hindu doctrines and beliefs. Coming to the question of Baba's *Hinduism* or other religion—Baba never declared (so far as I know) whether he belonged to any *religion, caste, creed, etc.* *He was above all.* But he has mentioned and done several things showing his relation to Hinduism.

I have heard Sai Baba say माझा गुरु ब्राह्मण आहे *i.e., my Guru is a Brahmin.*

BABA'S ATTITUDE TO HINDUISM AND BRAHMINS

Baba had a great regard for the *B. Gita, Bhawartha Ramayan, Ekanath Bhagwata, Panchadashi, Yoga Vasishta*, the *Puranas*, etc. His talks had reference to the contents of these often. When Jnanadeva's *Arati* was begun, he would sit up, fold his hands *joining his palms* in front of his chest in token of reverence and close his eyes. About *Panchadashi*, he said to Mr. Khaparde (as I hear) एतो अम्मरा खजना है *This is our treasury, i.e., it contains whatever is valuable for our spiritual welfare.* I know personally his

reverence for *Yoga Vasishta*. One day, in my early days (1914), Baba asked me several times to give him Rs. 15 as Dakshina. I had no money and he knew that fully well. So when I was alone with him, I said "Baba, you know, I have no money and why do you ask me for Rs. 15 Dakshina?" Baba answered that he knew my impecunious condition well enough. "But" he added "*you are reading Yoga Vasishta now. The part you are now reading is specially important. Get me Rs. 15 Dakshina from that.*" I was reading *Yoga Vasishta*. Getting money out of it was deriving valuable lessons therefrom; and giving the money to Baba meant of course lodging the lessons in my heart, where he stayed as my *Antaryami*. I also know that he held *Rama* and *Krishna* in great reverence.

BABA AND MAHARASHTRA SATPURUSHAS

Baba had great reverence for Saints like Jnaneshwar, Tukaram.

What were the aims, and the virtues needed for achieving them, in Sai Baba's view; and what *sadhanas* did he favour?

OF THE FOUR MARGAS

I. Yoga Marga

Regarding this as chiefly based on (1) Asana, (2) Pranayama, (3) Concentration, (4) Rousing the Kundalini and (5) Achieving higher powers thereby, *en route*, Sai Baba did not care for these. These were not the steps he recommended to any so far as I know. On the other hand, he said (I know personally), "Those who proceed by the method of

Pranayama must come to me ultimately for further progress."

II. Karma Marga

Baba set the example of living amidst society and labouring to produce goods. He ground grain into flour. He was not for ascetic desertion of society, nor for begging. Though he himself begged within limits (prescribed by his *Rinanubandha* perhaps) it was for a little food only; and when he demanded Dakshina that was for a number of reasons, chiefly clearing off *Rinanubandha*. He wanted the general run of visitors to continue their *grihasta* lives and did not advocate Sanyas, *i.e.*, that they should renounce society or go to beg. He made me and Vamanrao beg, not for ourselves but only for the Guru—as humble service to the Guru. Though Baba did not say so, I think he realised the evil of begging, *i.e.*, indiscriminate begging, to be the loss of one's stored up merit, *i.e.*, "Apurva."

Sai Baba's demand for Dakshina was explained by him, when some one asked him why he asked for Dakshina "*Hallo, do I ask Dakshina of every one? I demand only from those whom the fakir (God) points out to me.*" He demanded only particular sums, and would not accept anything more. None refused Dakshina, when he wanted it. Sometimes the demand had other meanings, *e.g.*, (1) get away, (2) get into contact with, X Y Z etc.

III. Jnana Marga

If this is taken as something confined to inquiry into the Self, and an effort to understand the Upanishads and Brahmasutras to get light on that inquiry, that was not Baba's method and aim. His wish was not expressed. But by his example,

his devotees should infer that he wanted them to become like himself. His knowledge and experience were, so far as I could see, real and realistic. His awareness exceeded the bounds of our space and time—extended over all the worlds and embraced the distant past and future as well as the present. He knew, therefore, what existence in any of the worlds and at any time had to offer for the soul's enjoyment; and with such knowledge, he renounced all attachment. He was **perfectly detached** amidst numerous attractions. His life was, therefore, real **Vairagya** and real **Nishkamya Karma** which would lead one to God.

IV. Bhakti Marga

This is, of course, the *main plank* of most saints,—as it is, of Sai Baba.

Obedying, serving and loving God are its chief features. The peculiar feature stressed by Sai's example and words is the vast importance of developing this devotion on the basis of devotion to one's guru or teacher. *It is seeing God in, through and as the Guru, identifying the Guru with God.*

BABA'S GURU

Of his guru, hardly anything is known. I have heard him say *माझा गुरु ब्राह्मण आहे* i.e., my Guru is a Brahmin. Baba held real Brahmins in high esteem. He has said "*Brahmins earn much 'Pica,' (i.e., Punya, Apurva or merit) by their ways.*"

A disciple is very different from a devotee. The Guru is connected by a close and intimate tie with and has every responsibility for the disciple. He has no such close tie with a devotee and is not bound to bear all his sins and sorrows. Sai Baba had no disciple. The disciple must serve his master

to carry out all his wishes strictly and to the letter. As Sai said, "I would tremble to come into the presence of my Guru." There was no one prepared to serve him in that way at Shirdi. It seems he asked "Who dares to call himself my disciple? Who can serve me adequately and satisfactorily?"

But, of devotees, Sai Baba had a large number. These he looked after, encouraged and protected and gave by example and occasional gestures, directions, etc., some instruction.

Sai Baba's method of teaching or rather improving the devotee who came to him was not oral instruction. *His moral tales* and a few directions, occasionally given were, no doubt, teaching through the ear. But these were exceptional and their effect was very little compared with his main traditional method.

According to *Sai Baba's traditions*, the disciple or devotee that comes to the feet of the Guru in *complete self-surrender* has to be no doubt pure, chaste and virtuous. But he has not necessarily to go on with any active practice of Japa or meditation. On the other hand, Japa, meditation or any other intellectual process which carries with it the consciousness and assertion, "I am doing this" is a handicap. All sense of the devotees' or disciples' *Ahankara*, *Ego* or little self *has to be wiped out*, swept out of the memory and mind—as it is an obstruction to the Guru's task. *The Guru does not teach. He radiates influence.* That influence is poured in and absorbed with full benefit by the soul which has completely surrendered itself, blotting out the self; but is obstructed by the exercise of intelligence, by reliance on self-exertion and by every species of self-consciousness and self-assertion.

This great truth, all observant persons visiting Sai Baba, would have noticed or learnt. Sai Baba's words to some devotees were "*Be by me and keep quiet. I will do the rest,*" i.e., secretly or invisibly.

Of course, **Faith in him is a pre-requisite.** But one had merely to see him and stay by him a while and at once was endowed with faith. Baba gave **experience** to each devotee—experience of Baba's vast powers of his looking into the heart, into the distant regions of space and time, past or future and then and there **infused faith.** One had not merely to swallow everything on trust. The solid benefit, temporal or spiritual reaped by the devotee, and his feeling that he is under the eye and power of Baba always wherever he may go and whatever he may do, give him an ineradicable basis for his further spiritual and temporal guidance. Baba's is the power that controls this world's goods and our fate here and now—as well as our experience and fate in the future in this world and many unseen worlds—unseen at present.

So the duty of a devotee or an aspirant is only (1) to keep himself fit for this Guru's grace, i.e., chaste, pure, simple and virtuous, and (2) to look trustfully and sincerely to the beloved Master to operate on him secretly, and to raise him to various experiences, higher and higher in range, till at last he is taken to the distant goal whatever that might be. "**One step enough for me**" is the **proper attitude now.** He need not take trouble to decide complicated, metaphysical and philosophical problems about ultimate destiny. He is yet ill prepared to solve them. The Guru will lift him, endow him with higher powers, vaster knowledge

and increasing realisation of truth. And the end is safe in the Guru's hands.

All this was not uttered by Sai Baba, at one breath to me or within my hearing. But the various hints I got from his example and dealings with many and his occasional words—when put together amount to this. And commonsense points in the same direction.

In my opinion, mere talk of Viveka and Vairagya without power of knowing what there is to experience or enjoy and what the things are that one is to renounce is childish and leads to self-delusion and deluding others. It is bookish wisdom and not real, not one that can stand the strain of actual life. People talking merely of these, without power to be really filled with them prove hypocrites. When Baba said I am in each dog, pig and cat, he was feeling himself in the inside of the cats, etc., in question and could state what they felt and what treatment they got. But others say it, because it is found in the Gita, etc., and they believe it to be true. But in point of feeling and realisation, they say what they do not feel. This leads to hypocrisy.

Baba's real nature and greatness are seen from an incident known to me. I realised that Baba was God from the devotees' point of view, and yet, a man seen in the flesh and with limitations to which an individual embodied soul is subject. The two co-exist and are both true—each in its way. But my friends, (*i.e.*, some of the devotees) at Shirdi did not agree with me or relish this view of mine. They once talked of 56 crores of islanders in Dwarka at Shree Krishna's time and I then disputed that estimate of the population, as now we are

about 33 crores in all in India and India is so over-populated that we have to tread on each other's heels. Then they asked me if I would agree to abide by Baba's decision on the matter. I said, yes. We all went to Baba.

Madhava Rao and other devotees asked Baba—Baba, are the *Puranas* true?

Sai Baba: Yes. *True.*

Devotees: What about *Rama* and *Krishna*?

Sai Baba: They were great souls. *Gods they were. Avatars.*

Devotees: This Narke will not accept all that. He says *you are not God.*

Sai Baba: What he says is *true.* **But I am your father and you should not speak like that. You have to get your benefit and everything from me.**

Sai Baba thus admitted his limitation. He was God no doubt, in the experience of the devotee. But because the devotee felt that, Sai Baba did not assert himself to be, in fact, nothing but God; he did not draw logical corollaries from it, nor use that position to help himself to the wealth, etc., of the devotees.

Sai Baba did not use the fact of his devotees viewing him as God to declare for *Antinomianism*, i.e., setting himself up as above law. On the other hand, Sai Baba never disobeyed either the moral law or the law as it prevails in the country. He was never indecent in dress or behaviour and was very reserved with women.

SAI BABA'S MOODS

No doubt, in *certain ecstatic moods*, he said (and I heard this myself) मैं अल्ला हूँ *I am God*. But this was once in a way. His usual—*almost invariable* role was that of a devotee of God entrusted with vast powers to carry out what God (*the "Fakir"*) directs. "*Allah Malik*." God is the Master. "*Allah Bhale Karanga*", "*God will bless*" were constantly on his lips. Also, *I am God's slave. I remember God, etc.*

BABA AND THE SEX QUESTION

Baba's was **Askalita Brahmacharya** and his **glittering eyes spoke it out**. He kept women at a distance. During the day, a very few women were allowed to massage his legs—and that only up to the knee. He was always clad and never indecently exposing himself.

BABA'S VIRTUES

He was impartial and just. I have seen rich and high placed persons going to him, being practically ignored by him—as he saw through the outside, into the real nature, or the heart of the person approaching him. I have also seen him pay great regard to and speak eulogistically of some poor man that came to him, saying, "He has much money" ("*Pica*"), *i.e.*, much merit or *punya* accumulated.

STERN JUSTICE

A Saint should not be judged by the character of those that gathered round him. Prostitutes, women hunters, avaricious people and sinners of various sorts came to him with a view mostly to

gain material advantage. But when they failed to take advantage of his presence to improve themselves but fell into sins, he let them suffer. His justice was severe. "You have to cut your own child, if it falls athwart the womb" he has said.

Baba's Boldness based on "Foreknowledge" or "Perfect Vision."—Baba was bold in his dealings with persons, with the forces of disease, etc., unknown to us, but evidently well-known to him. He occasionally infused faith in his devotees by such bold defiance of sanitary precautions. I will mention some instances known to me.

Baba used to get sweetmeat from a Halwayi for *Naivedya*. One day in 1916, H lay a corpse, a plague-sticken corpse. Plague was raging at Shirdi. Baba asked me to go and get the sweetmeat from his shop. I went and told the wife (who was weeping) of Baba's order. She pointed to the corpse and said that I might take the sweetmeat from the almyrah. I took it, trembling with the fear that by this I might catch the infection and others too. That was given as *Naivedya*. Baba told me, "You think you will live if you are away from Shirdi, and that you would die, if you stay at Shirdi. That is not so. Whosoever is (destined) to be struck, will be struck; whosoever is to die will die; whosoever is to be caressed will be caressed."

He encouraged me similarly when cholera raged in Shirdi.

He had lepers about him who massaged his legs. One of them got cured. Baba made a leper take the **udhi**, ashes from the fire **dhuni** and gave it as *prasad* to the devotees. The **udhi** is put into the mouth of sick people. And the leper gave it to all by Baba's order! Yet no harm has resulted so far as I know.

III

16th Oct. 1936, NASIK & 28th Oct. 1936, SHIRDI.

Rao Bahadur S.B. Dhumal, B.A., LL.B., Pleader, Brahmin, aged 63, Nasik, says :

I have one great difficulty in answering the question "What are your experiences of Sai Baba?" All hours of day and night, I am having experiences of Baba. There is no incident or event in my life which I do not connect with him—however trivial it may appear to be. I firmly believe that everything in my life is swayed by Baba. What then is to be mentioned as my experience? Of course, the outside world will not be ready to accept my belief as correct or well-founded. But that matters nothing to me. In fact, that very disbelief of people seems to be a reason for refusing to disclose one's experience. Every devotee feels that his experiences are his own, and are given to him for his own spiritual and temporal benefit and not for ventilation or publication to the general public which, of course, includes masses of ignorant, irreverent carping critics and scoffers. Yet ardent biographers are anxious to ferret out one's innermost secret and sacred experiences to embellish their work. But the devotee whom they delve into feels that in the very act of dragging the secret experience into light, its reality and life are destroyed. The anatomist anxious to examine the living organism inch by inch cuts out what he wants and places it under his microscope, but in that very act, life is destroyed; and what he examines with his instrument is dead tissue and not the living organism. The best way of understanding Baba is to experience him oneself. Where is Baba gone?

He is still alive and active—more active, if that were possible, than he was before his Mahasamadhi. **Anyone in down right earnest can get into touch with him, to-day and at once.** But if one will not do that, but wants experiences, second hand, third hand or even fifth hand, he will get but poor stuff. I feel also very strongly the regrettable facts that experiences which get their significance and full force when expressed in our vernacular are to be now expressed to you and by you in English and that the loss in transition will be serious.*

Anyhow as you want some facts about Baba, I shall narrate some that I can personally vouch for, i.e., about myself chiefly.

I was first (in 1903) devoted to Gajanan Maharaj whom I took to Srimant Gopalrao Buti. About 1907 I went to Sai Baba. From my very first visit, I was greatly impressed with his extraordinary personality. At his unspoken command, I took G. Buti to him; and at once Buti also became his devoted follower. Among the services of the latter to Baba, perhaps the most momentous and memorable is his allowing his huge stone-pile (Dagdiwada) to be used as the Temple for the reception of the mortal remains and the worship of Baba.

It is difficult to sort out my recollections of Baba, as I consider that every act of mine and every event in my life is moulded and directed by

* Cf. the same view in E. Herman's *Meaning & Value of Mysticism* p. 14. "There is nothing more seriously powerful than the influence of phraseology upon the mind; and in eight cases out of ten, a proposition which would be convincing if couched in the language of the reader's intellectual *habitat* becomes 'sicklied o'er with the pale cast' of artificiality and quasi-esotericism when presented in a foreign tongue."

him. I may quote some sayings and acts of his which throw light on what Sai Baba is, has done, and is doing for devotees (like me).

Once Baba told me **"At every step of yours, I am taking care of you.** If I did not, what will become of you, God knows." This was no overstatement. At another time, when we two were alone, Baba told me: "Bhau, the whole of last night, I had no sleep."

I: Baba, why so?

Baba: **"I was thinking and thinking of you, all the night."**

At this declaration, I was overpowered by a sudden gush of love, gratitude, surprise, etc., feelings which could find no other expression than a free flow of tears. What intense love he had for me! What an amount of trouble he took for my sake! Just as I was always thinking of him, he was kind enough to think of me—with this difference. My thought of him, though loving was weak, and I could render him no real service. But his love was accompanied by such vast insight and such power that I was helped in every act and event. He could and did foresee things far ahead and took every required step to avert the evil and accelerate or promote the good that was coming to me. There are numerous instances that may be cited to show this. Outsiders may not be convinced that every such benefit derived by me was and is due to his guidance and ordering. But some instances of his help are so glaring that any fair-minded inquirer who is open to conviction, will be immediately convinced of the truth of what has been stated by Baba and by me.

Emboldened by his love, I used to write to him, and Sri Madhava Rao Deshpande would read my

letters to him and communicate his replies to me. In some cases, even during his life-time and in all cases after his Mahasamadhi (1918 October) I addressed my queries to him mentally or by prayerfully placing chits (or casting lots) before his portrait; and I invariably got his answer showing me what was the correct and safe course for me to follow. I invariably followed his advice—however much it might run counter to “commonsense,” “medical opinion,” “rules of prudence,” etc., and invariably discovered that the path chosen for me by Baba was the safest and wisest.

HYGIENE, ETC.

I have lived in this ancestral house of mine in the main road of Nasik, all my life. When plague broke out and dead rats were found in the house, I wrote to Shirdi for Baba's direction before moving out, and left the house as soon as I got his reply. As I am ever under his protection and doing nothing without his guidance, I felt perfectly safe in remaining in the house till I got his reply. He has said that at every step he was guiding me. I knew he was guiding me—I had implicit faith in the truth of his words. He knew everything that was happening or was to happen at Nasik or in any other place, and he would not allow any harm to befall me while I was placing this childlike trust in and reliance on him.

During all these twentynine years of such reliance, there is not a single instance in which such protection failed or such trust found misplaced.

After receiving Baba's reply, I removed to a bungalow at Nasik. But the same night a dead rat was found near the bed of my brother's son at the bungalow. Again I sought Baba's advice by

letter whether I should move away. The reply was in the negative. And contrary to the rules of prudence and wisdom of medical experts and laymen, I kept on living with my family at the bungalow. No harm befel us. Later, dead rats were found in the servants' quarters, in the houses, in the neighbourhood, and lastly, in the well from which alone we had drawn all our supply of water for drinking, cooking, etc. At this, I wrote at once to Baba for permission; and in anticipation of its arrival which I considered as certain, I packed up all our things and carted them off to this our house in the Bazaar Street. I went to the house and was just trying to unlock the front door, when a postal letter from Shirdi was delivered to me. That conveyed Baba's reply to me, "आपण कशाला सोडावे तेथेंच राहावे" *i.e.*, why should we give up, (*i.e.*, change) our residence?" I adopted this advice without question or demur and went back immediately to the infected bungalow and lived in it. (As for water, I took the precaution of avoiding the well and getting all our water from the river Godavari). This further apparently risky and foolhardy step of reoccupation did not result in any harm to us. There were times during the Plague Season when there were 14 or 15 deaths *per diem* due to plague in the town—and despite that fact, Baba bade us stay in the house in town; and we were all safe.

Baba's kindness to me and mine was not confined to temporal affairs. I lost my wife in 1909. I was anxious about her soul's welfare and was performing the monthly (Masik) ceremonies. At the time when the sixth month's ceremony had to be performed, Baba told me to perform it at Shirdi and promised to give my wife *Sadgati*, (*i.e.*,

literally a good start for her soul's further spiritual course). I went to Shirdi accordingly and performed that Masik there. Baba then asked me for Rs. 15 dakshina and I gave it. I have implicit faith in the truth of Baba's declarations and have had ample verification in matters which admit of verification, which naturally fortifies my faith in his statements as to matters unseen and apparently incapable of verification. I am sure my wife got *Sadgati* by Baba's grace.

Then, as I was in 1909 a vigorous and healthy lawyer, aged 36, without issue, the question of marrying a second time was frequently considered, especially by my friends and well-wishers. Among them was my father-in-law, Rao Bahadur Bapu Rao Dada Kinkhede, M.A., a Pleader of Nagpur. When I told him that I could never act without a direction from Baba, he took me to Shirdi; and then went to Baba without me. He came back in five minutes and intimated to me that he could read Baba's negative reply from his eyes, and told me not to marry without Baba's express consent or order. Of course, I never acted without Baba's consent. Up-to-date, Baba has not made me marry and I have continued my life of "single blessedness." Alike from the temporal and spiritual viewpoint Baba has settled this course for me and after a fairly happy and successful temporal life, Baba is developing in me a slow but sure detachment from the temporal comforts, and I am surrendering myself to his guidance without the faintest fear for my future here or hereafter in spite of the fact that his ways are mysterious, highly puzzling and really inscrutable in many matters. As for temporal success, it is not vain glory but a desire to set down the actual truth that makes me inform you

that almost invariably my professional efforts were crowned with success, and from their financial or personal aspect also, I had nothing to complain of, as my income-tax would clearly indicate. It was all due to Baba's help and grace. Yet despite all this temporal success, he keeps me free—more and more free, from worldly shackles, and ready for retirement, when he gives the signal.

I had some public activities also which I took up with Baba's permission and in which his miraculous intervention and help were occasionally seen. Some instances appear so incredible that I first hesitated to reveal them. But it matters nothing to me whether they command other people's belief or not. As you want the truth, here is the truth as known to or experienced by me.

I will give instances of Baba's help in professional matters first, and then proceed to his help in public matters. Some 20 or 25 years ago, there was a Criminal Case from Shirdi. There have always been party feeling and factions at Shirdi as in most villages. One Raghu, a servitor of Baba and five others were arraigned on a charge of outraging the modesty of a Marwadi woman, and on the direct evidence of a "number of eye-witnesses," were convicted and sentenced to six months or less of imprisonment. Tatya Patel Khote's sympathies and help were on the side of the accused. He took up a copy of the judgment and papers to eminent lawyers like the Hon. G. S. Khaparde and H. S. Dixit and retired Magistrates like Rao Bahadur H. V. Sathe, who were at Shirdi. These found the judgment was strong, and gave little hope of success in case an appeal should be filed. Tatya Patel was keen on an acquittal and

went to Baba, who simply told him, "Go to Bhau with the papers." He accordingly came to Nasik and showed me the papers. After going through the judgment and finding hardly any hope of success on appeal, I told Tatya to employ eminent Counsel from Bombay or prominent lawyers at Ahmednagar where the appeal had to be filed. But he told me that Baba's order was to go to me and so I felt I had neither option nor responsibility on my shoulders. I wrote out an appeal memo, after studying the papers, and took it to the District Magistrate at his residence. He asked me—without receiving or reading the judgment or appeal memo—what the matter was about and I very briefly recited that it was a conviction of six appellants for outraging the modesty of a woman based on the testimony of a number of witnesses, who professed to have seen it and that the case had now come up in appeal to him. Then he said it looked like a strong case and asked me what I thought of it. I said that the case and its number of witnesses were due to faction in the village. "Do you think so?" he asked and I replied "Think! I am more than sure of it." He pronounced judgment at once, orally acquitting all the appellants and immediately took up my appeal memo and wrote on it his judgment mentioning the facts I relied upon. As soon as this was over he asked me "How is your Sai Baba of Shirdi? Is he a Moslem or a Hindu? What does he teach you?" I answered that Sai Baba was neither a Hindu nor a Moslem but above both, and that I could not state what his teachings were—to know which, he must go in person to Baba at Shirdi. The Magistrate promised to go and in fact tried one summer day to visit Shirdi but gave up the idea at Kopergaon, on account of the excessive

heat. The prompt oral judgment without reading or receiving any papers (of course without sending for the records of the First Court or giving notice to the Police or Public Prosecutor—) followed up by questions about Sai Baba were clear indications of the power that brought about the acquittal. What followed would confirm this view. I returned from Ahmednagar to Shirdi. There, on that day, the residents were sadly going to attend the cremation of H. S. Dixit's daughter. But Baba called some of them to him at the Masjid and said, "Do not go away. I will show you some *Chamatkar*," (i.e., miracle). They did not see any miracle and went away to attend the funeral. Shortly thereafter, I returned from Ahmednagar with news of the acquittal by the District Magistrate in the above fashion. Then they found what the "Chamatkar" referred to by Baba was.

I shall give only one more instance in matters professional. There was a charge against and conviction of three brothers for grievous hurt inasmuch as they had attacked their opponents and broken a bone of one of them. The injured man had been attended to by a medical man, who was not a qualified or certified Doctor and treated for over twenty days in his private Hospital. I was engaged for the appellants and I went up with the appeal memo and a bail application. The Sessions Judge, who was a senior European Officer, remarked on hearing my application that the case was strong (against the appellants) and he was not going to allow bail. I at once thought of Baba and then turned to the Judge. I told him that the evidence of a bone being broken was that of a "quack" or unqualified person and that the prosecution evidence was interested and unreliable, and that as all three

appellants, who were agriculturists, were in jail, their agricultural work of their family could not be carried on, that in case their sentence should be confirmed, they could be sent to jail finally, etc. At once the Judge allowed bail. When the case came up for argument, the Public Prosecutor asked me if I was going to argue on the merits for an acquittal against such a strong judgment, or whether I would briefly ask for clemency, in which latter case he would not oppose. Though I felt the strength of the judgment, I put on a brave face and said that I would go the whole hog and fight for an acquittal. I did argue for a reversal before the Judge but wound up with a prayer for reduction of sentence. The Judge retorted that if I was merely asking for mercy of the court I need not have taken so much time to contest the conviction. When the Public Prosecutor was arguing, the Judge wanted to know how he made out a case of grievous hurt as the opinion of an unqualified man, a quack could not be accepted as to the breakage of a bone. The reply was that the injured man had been in the Hospital for over 20 days. The Judge sharply answered, "That is an argument which you can advance before a 3rd Class Magistrate. Remember you are arguing before a Sessions Judge and not before a 3rd Class Magistrate." On receiving this snub, the Public Prosecutor collapsed; there was no further argument; and the appellants were acquitted.

Regarding public work, I may first mention that I was the first Non-Official President of the Nasik District Local Board (nominated by Government) and that I served in that capacity from 1-11-1917 to 13-5-1925. I had personally to sign thousands of papers myself without the use of

a facsimile seal,—a proceeding which took many hours of my day; and one consequence of this heavy public work was to ruin my legal practice, and reduce my income-tax from 260 and odd rupees to zero—in recognition of which sacrifice, this Sanad of Rao Bahadur was granted to me in 1927—a very poor and unsubstantial recognition you may say—but it is still some form of recognition. Anyhow I faced the work and went on trusting in Baba for the proper execution of my office. A peon had to carry these papers to me and blot each signature, and after some hours the work would be over and the papers sent back to the office. One day, when the papers were before me, a visitor for whom I had much regard came in and stayed talking with me till midnight and so the signatures had to be postponed till the next day. The next morning, I found no time and as I was leaving the town, I sent back the papers to the office. When I returned to the town that night, I found only that day's papers brought for my signature and when I wanted the previous day's papers, I found that they all bore my signature. The peon had been sent away for his meal, the previous midnight and how the thousands of signatures had been affixed to the papers I could not guess. I have no other explanation for it, except Baba and his **superhuman powers**.

Another public act of mine in which Baba's helping hand is traceable is this. As President, District Local Board, Primary Schools were under me. Deepawali holidays had fallen immediately after the close of the month. The Educational Inspector, a Mahomedan gentleman, one day came to me and asked me to make disbursements to help the teachers in such a big festival. At first I did

not consider his request seriously. Two or three days after, he again reminded me of his proposal. I asked the Chief Officer whether this could be done. He answered in the negative as sanction of Government grant was not received and that the Account Office informed my office not to issue cheque in the absence of sanction. I was helpless. Again the Educational Inspector opened the subject to me. I was inclined to agree but wanted Baba's permission. I cast lots and Baba approved disbursement. I at once issued cheque and sent the same to the Account Office, with the result that it was cashed, payments made and all the teachers were pleased. But what was to happen to me for brushing aside the Accountant's objection and issuing the cheque? By Baba's grace, it was nothing more than an audit objection raised long after the event and communicated to me; and my reply to it or endorsement thereon was "noted for future guidance." There the matter ended.

Amidst the innumerable instances of Baba's help to me at every turn or crisis of my life I may select a few.

In 1910, my intimate friend, Srimant Gopal Rao Buti, was anxious to help me. He agreed to lend me the necessary sums to maintain me in England for my study at the Bar and my family in India during my absence. We had settled in full detail all parts of this scheme and went to Baba for his approval. When Madhav Rao Deshpande put him the question "Should not Bhav (*i.e.*, myself) be sent to Vilayat (*i.e.*, England)?" Baba asked "What for?"

M. Deshpande: To study for the Bar.

Baba: No. His Ilayat (natural aptitude) and Vilayat (will of heaven) are not in Bilayat, but in this country. Why should he go to England? I realised then that,

“The best laid schemes of mice and men
Do often gang agley.”

In 1912, I underwent an operation in J. J. Hospital, under chloroform. It was a serious venture. But I saw Baba seated on a chair at my head, close to the operation table before the chloroform began to operate. He was there to look after me and I felt re-assured. The operation was, in fact, safely performed and was a success.

In 1915, I was offered the Public Prosecutorship at Nasik but I took two days' time to consider and wrote at once to Baba. Quickly came the reply “Your former work is good. Do not accept the new;” and I declined the offer.

In 1918, a few days before Baba passed away, influenza was raging at Shirdi, at Poona and many other places. At Poona my brother's wife had a very serious attack and he wired to me about it to Nasik. So I started at once with Rs. 80 in my pocket to cover expenses of the journey and to meet all contingencies. I halted *en route* at Shirdi to get Baba's blessings and Udhi for the patient. When I went to him, Baba took from me dakshina repeatedly; and the Rs. 80 or the balance thereof was cleared off my hand in no time. This was no good augury of my trip to Poona being achieved or made useful to the patient. When I craved leave to go, Baba said in his characteristic fashion (reminding one of the form of the Regal Veto “The King will consider”) उद्यां पाहू—*i. e.*, we shall see (what to do) to-morrow. He stopped me

for three days. Meanwhile, a wire from Poona announced that the patient had expired. After that Baba gave me leave to go away. It was clear that Baba saw what was happening and to happen to my sister-in-law and judged it best for her to depart from the world and me to reach Poona some days after her departure. His reasons for such judgment, I could not discover. But surely he was in a position to judge and I was not. So I meekly accepted his decision as final, as usual. This was shortly before he himself passed away and he gave me on the above occasion the last opportunity of spending a few days with him while he was in the flesh.

By Baba's grace, I soon recovered some part of my former financial position after it was wrecked by District Local Board Presidentship or by acceptance of other office.

I was holding the office of Revenue Member of the Dewar State from 1-9-1930 to 9-4-1932 and I was the Karbhari of the Surgana State from end of 1932 to August 1933. Each time I returned to Nasik, I resumed my practice and got on as well as I did before, without having to wait idly even for a day. Baba's kind help on the financial side was manifested in a peculiar incident while I was in the latter State. One day I was seated at my meal and the Chief of that State walked into my room. I apologised for my inability to leave the table and accord him a proper reception or even to offer him a fitting chair or seat. But he quickly walked into the next room, gazed awhile at the portrait of Sai Baba that was hanging on the wall and returned to my dining room. He at once announced to me that from that time, I should

have an increase of Rs. 50 in my salary. I had never asked for this increase. This grant of an increase in salary within a fortnight of my appointment and without any motion on my part can only be explained by his having been with Baba in my Pooja room. I had not asked for the increase. Baba evidently had, माउलीचें चित्त लेकराचें हित *i. e.*, the child's welfare is the mother's care.

As for my pooja, I may mention that I had first the photos of Baba and later the coloured or painted portraits of Baba for worship. I carried these pictures wherever I went. When I was tossing between Dewar and Nasik several times, first my cook at Dewar and later my nephew at Nasik wanted them or some of them to be left behind. Each time I cast lots before Baba, to ascertain his wish, and each time came the answer that I should carry them with me. The middle portrait which I constrained Radhakrishna Ayi to part with, I specially like. In it, Baba is standing in a pensive or meditative mood. It reminds me of that important occasion when he made the disclosure "Bhav, I had no sleep all night due to thinking and thinking of you."

I was passing by the side of the Masjid with that picture in my hands from Ayi's residence. Baba called me and I went into the Masjid. Pointing to the portrait, he asked

Baba: "What is this?"

I: "You are here."

Baba: Give it to me.

I gave it to him. He kept it a while, gazed at its front side and back side, and returned it to me, saying "keep it."

This is the very thing my heart was desiring, to get Baba's portrait, touched by him and given to me for purposes of worship. This is now a personal gift by Baba to me and I regard it with great veneration.

Baba gave me other articles to be kept safe and sacred. On the first occasion he took Rs. 2 from me as a dakshina and returned it saying "जपूत टेवा. कोणाला देवू नको खर्च करू नको" i.e., "Preserve this carefully. Do not part with it to anyone—nor spend it." With the same direction, he gave me again Rs. 2 on another occasion, Rs. 20, Rs. 15 and Rs. 30 on other occasions—making a sum of Rs. 69 which I preserve very carefully, not merely as mementos of Baba's loving care for me but as charmed coins that carry luck with them. Each of these gifts was characteristic of Baba. When I and G. Buty were present, Baba asked the latter for Rs. 20 dakshina and when he gave it, Baba transferred it to me. On other occasions he gave me sums totalling Rs. 30. On another occasion he asked for and got Rs. 30 from Buty and shaking it between his palms suddenly divided it into two parts, and held each in one hand. He gave the contents of one hand to Buti and one to me. We went to our quarters and counted our sums. To our surprise, we found each got exactly Rs. 15.

The true lover gives and receives. ददाति प्रति गृह्णाति; and Baba's love took moneys from me. I gave them gladly. These dakshinas are often found to convey an allegorical or esoteric meaning which the circumstances or accompanying remarks throw light upon.

Baba has at times reduced his devotees on their visit, to an absolutely penniless condition, by

taking away all the cash with them, on the possession of which they had been relying. यस्यानुग्रह मिच्छामि तस्य सर्वं हराम्यहम् He has frequently reduced me also to this condition. I have however entertained neither regret at parting with the last pie nor fear. For, it is He who gives and He who takes back what he has given. It is up to him to provide us with ways and means when he denudes us of every bit of cash. And he has never failed to provide.

As instances, besides the eighty rupees incident of 1918 that I mentioned above, I can cite others. It will, however, suffice to give two more instances. Some time prior to the above incident when I went to him, he by repeated requests for dakshina took away all I had. Then again he asked me "Bhav, give me Rs. 7." I explained that I had nothing left with me. He then told me to get it from some one. This was a valuable lesson to me in humility. I must not consider myself too high to beg or borrow. In fact, this lesson was so forcibly brought home to me when I visited Shirdi, after he attained Mahasamadhi, that I went round to beg for bread in the places where Baba used to beg for his bread. By such means, his grace has kept down my pride and egotism which otherwise would soar so high as to avoid contact with the so-called "lower strata" of society.

On another occasion after depleting my resources, Baba asked me for Rs. 50. And when I told him I had no cash left, he made me go round and ask some person, who gave me a negative reply. Then he made me go to Rao Bahadur Sathe, who rejoiced at the request being made to him. The significance of my going to the latter for Rs. 50 was not explained to me then. But much later I

was told that at that time, Rao Bahadur's claim for pension was being considered ;—the matter in doubt was whether it should be a lower amount as first calculated on the last permanent appointment or an amount higher by Rs. 50 being based on a calculation of his *sub protem* appointment.

He succeeded in gaining his higher pension and Baba's direction that I should go to him for Rs. 50 was indicative of his success ; and the date of the order was the date of Baba's demand for Rs. 50.

On the occasion of the "Chamatkar" criminal appeal, the appellants without any demand from me paid me a fee of Rs. 300. Baba, during my stay of three days on my return from Ahmednagar, took away exactly that sum from me, by repeated requests for dakshina. It was most fitting and proper that there should be no receipt of consideration by me for defending my own Guru's servitor and at his behest—especially, when I had really done no work and when the entire success was due to his miraculous control over the District Magistrate's mind.

In closing this brief account of my personal experiences, I may quote a few of Baba's spiritual teachings or declarations.

He once made a remark which would intensify and strengthen our faith in Him and give us some clue to his real nature. To some one who was talking of God, he said "Why do you say 'God,' 'God,' God is in my pocket?"

As to God's dual or multiple function, (suggested for instance by the Trimurthis welded into one as Datta or Brahman) he once made a pregnant remark. With his usual lavish generosity

coupled with personal humility, he was one day preparing his हंडी, *i. e.*, himself cooking food for hundreds and freely feeding the poor and all that wanted the food, with his own personal labour. While the Handi was being boiled, a Fakir came, who was particularly keen on getting animal food and he put some flesh into the Handi. As Baba was going on with his cooking, Balasaheb Mirikar evidently disgusted with the transformation of an innocent vegetarian *Bhandar* to all into a special dinner for those who loved to feast by killing animals for filling their stomachs, asked Baba "Why all this *Himsa*, *i. e.*, cruelty to other creatures for feeding ourselves?" Baba then answered cryptically जो मारील तोच तरील जो तारील तो च मारील, *i. e.*, literally "He that slays saves; He that saves slays." This apart from its implied or express reference to the tripartite functions of the God that creates, maintains and withdraws or destroys might be deemed more particularly to refer to the special function of *Sat Purushas* like Sai Baba, who bless one with *Sadgati* when that one (human or sub-human creature) dies or is killed at their feet or in their proximity.

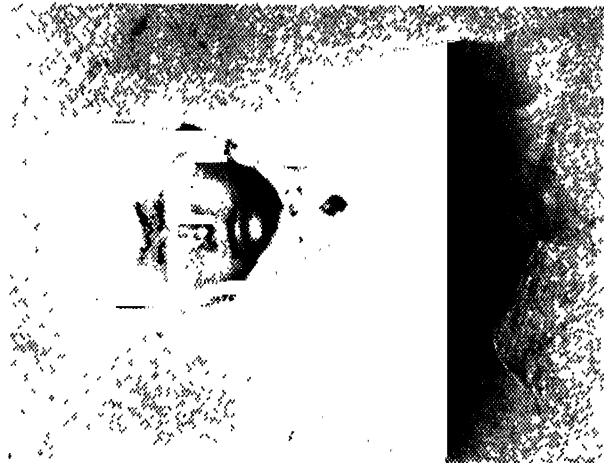
I may close this account with two incidents from the life of the late Mr. H. S. Dixit personally communicated by him to me.

Mr. Dixit was latterly getting embarrassed in his financial arrangements. On one occasion he found that a sum of Rs. 30,000 was due four days later, and he was troubled about the question wherefrom and how he was to get the money. That night he dreamt of the creditor as tormenting him with his claim for the amount, and he replied in the dream to the creditor in order to reassure him

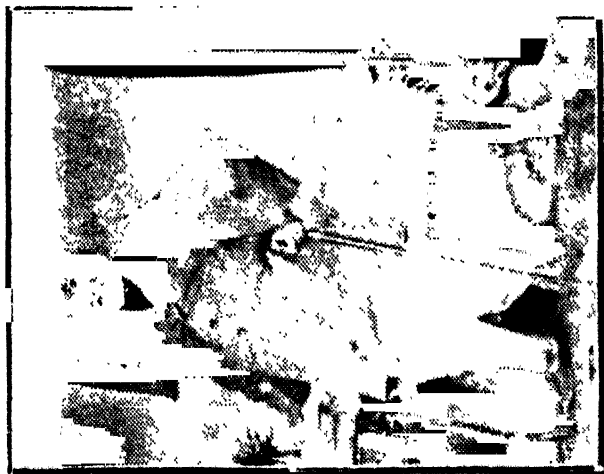
“Do not fear that your amount will not be duly repaid. I have my resources. I know Sir Chimanlal, Sir X and Sir Y. So do not fear.” Shortly thereafter he woke up and remembered the dream. He was aghast at his own ungrateful folly and stupidity in relying on the poor human support of Sir X, Sir Y and Sir Z who would probably disappoint one at the critical moment and leave him in the lurch, and his failing to recognize that his only and true sheet anchor or Providence was Sri Sai. He wept at his folly and went before the portrait of Sai Baba and entreated him to pardon that folly. Thereafter he felt assured that Baba and Baba alone would help him. It was upto Baba to save him and Baba would never fail a devotee at the hour of need. Yet as the day and hour for payment were nearing, he could not discover any money forthcoming. Just the day previous to the due date, while he was ruminating upon his affairs in his office, the son of his late intimate friend and banker called upon him and wanted his advice whether a sum of Rs. 30,000 he had, should be invested in one way or in another. Mr. Dixit explained to him difficulties in the proposed investments and added that if the investor was thinking of investing with Mr. Dixit himself, he would be the last person to take advantage of his intimacy with his father and accept the proffered deposit. Mr. Dixit frankly stated that in his embarrassed condition, he would not be able perhaps to return the deposit on the date fixed. The visitor far from being deterred by such revelation insisted that the revealed facts were just his reason for insisting that Mr. Dixit should accept the deposit. The son would not be true to his father, if he failed to help him with an accommoda-

tion at the time of need. In this view, he pressed the deposit on Mr. Dixit, who thereupon paid his creditor at the due date. Sai had shown himself capable of wielding tens of thousands of rupees and moulding peoples' wills and intentions to suit his scheme of helping his devotees.

Mr. Dixit's younger brother, Sadashiv, B.A., LL.B., tried his hand at practice at Nagpur, Bombay and Khandwa successively with disheartening results. Then H. S. Dixit cast lots before Baba, and with Baba's consent again took him to Bombay to work in his office. After a short time, the result seemed to be unsatisfactory. Mr. Sadashiv told his brother that he would go away. H. S. D. wondered how in spite of Baba's approval of Sadashiv's being taken to Bombay, the step should prove to be utterly futile. In any case, he thought, he would postpone his brother's return to Khandwa till after the approaching Deepavali holidays. During those days, things took a strange turn. A friend of Mr. H. S. Dixit came to him and said that the Cutch State required a highly reliable Officer for their Bank with a knowledge of Gujarati. At once, Mr. H. S. Dixit asked him if Mr. Sadashiv would suit. The friend was very glad to have Sadashiv (whom he believed not to be available) and recommended him to the State. Thenceforward, Sadashiv, who was found a failure at Law in so many places, got appointed on a salary of Rs. 1,000 a month and held it for a long time. This upshot showed that Baba in allowing or directing his devotee to go to Bombay was seeing not merely the immediate and near future but more distant prospects and enduring benefits.



Kaluream.



S. B. Nachne.



Sainath and Vasudev.



S. B. Nachne and family—all except Vasudev.

IV

13th SEPTEMBER, 1936, THANA.

Santaram Balwant Nachne Dahanukar, says :

I have given parts of my experience already to Sai Lila Masik (*vide* Vol. I (xii) 94). But as there was the feeling that it was a publication to all and sundry, I had expressed myself with considerable reserve and did not mention many features especially those that ordinary people would not credit. Now, I will try to recall, in spite of the long time that has lapsed, as much as I can and give you a fuller account and include in it my later experiences, *i. e.*, those which I have had after the above-mentioned publication (in 1923).

In 1909, some events took place which at that time seemed to be little connected with Sai Baba. In that year, one day my elder brother was undergoing an operation very near his throat in Bajekar's Hospital at Bombay ; and we were all anxious about it. I was at Dahanu then and a Sadhu approached and asked me if he could get a crumb or two of bread. We invited him inside and gave him a regular course of dishes, *i. e.*, a full meal. My sister-in-law was serving him all the dishes ; but she intentionally omitted at first to give him " Bendi Baji " *i. e.*, a dish made of lady's fingers—thinking that it was too poor a stuff to be given to a revered and saintly guest. But the Sadhu himself called for " Bendi Baji ;" and it was then served. That Sadhu blessed us all and told us that the operation at the hospital that day had been safely performed. The same day my friend, Haribhav Moreswar Panse told me that he hoped that the operation by the grace of Sri

Sai Baba, would be a success. That was the first mention of Sai Baba to me. I had not then known of him. Evidently Panse had.

Later in the evening, we learnt from my father who returned from the hospital that the operation had been performed and that there was no trouble or danger. After the operation a Sadhu had appeared there and approaching the patient passed his hands over the operated part and the body, and said all would go on well. The operation proved quite safe and my brother recovered.

The same year, my father attended Das Ganu's Kirtan, wherein Sai Baba was described as a veritable Avatar of Datta, as a remarkable person with wonderful powers and wonderful kindness. We got a picture of Sai Baba and worshipped it with *Udbatti* (lighting scented sticks) at home.

In 1912 was my first visit to Shirdi. I had appeared for my Revenue Subordinates Examination and before the results were announced, I went to Shirdi along with two friends, Sankar Balakrishna Vaidya and Achyuta Date. On the way, we alighted at Kopergaon station. There the Station Master learning of our intended visit to Sai Baba, aired his views rather freely and said that undue honour was being lavished upon and people were being gulled by one who was a *mere hypnotist*, like so many of these wandering jugglers and thaumaturgists all over the country. This rude fusillade at Sai Baba unsettled my mind about him and I was beginning to doubt if after all, it was a real saint we were taking so much trouble to visit. We reached Shirdi anyhow and saw Sai Baba returning from the Lendi. He must have

evidently noticed my condition. He looked at me, and at once, without having any information given to him as to who I was, etc., said "*What? Have you come away without taking leave from the Mamlatdar?*" I said "Yes." Baba advised me and said "*Do not behave like this.*" This removed all the doubts that the Station Master's thoughtless remarks had raised in my mind. I felt I was before a saint who knew everything that happened in places far away from him.

We stayed three days at Shirdi on this occasion. Each day, Baba's kindness and powers were manifested with greater frequency and force and the result was perfect assurance and confidence. I became a firm believer in and worshipper of Baba thenceforward.

Baba took Udhi from my hand and applied it to my forehead—a mark of favour and love that is not bestowed on all. Again when people were assembling for Arati at the Masjid, and I was among them, Baba asked me to go and take my meal. I said it was *Ekadasi*. Usually I did not fast on Ekadasi days; but my two friends did and I had to conform to their ways and not be singular and claiming advantages which they did not share. But Baba did not want me to fast. He said (referring to my companions) "These people are mad. You had better go to the Wada and eat." The person who had to serve the food at the Wada was grumbling that I should be clamouring for food on an Ekadasi day and would not give me food till Arati was over. So he came to the Mosque and I also returned to the Mosque. Baba again questioned me if I had messed but I said that it was time for Arati and so the meal might be

deferred till the completion of the Arati. But Baba insisted and said "The Arati will wait and will begin after you finish your meal and come." The hotel man had to yield and gave me food. Then I went to the Mosque for the Arati. At that time a lady generally known as "Mavusi" brought *beda* (i.e., rolled up *betel and nut*) to Baba. Baba gave me some and asked me to eat it. As it is usual to avoid chewing betel and nut (which are considered as luxuries and for that and other reasons avoided on Ekadasi days) I hesitated. Baba said again, "Eat it." I obeyed and chewed the *beda*.

At the close of the Arati Baba took dakshina of Rs. 4 from me and Rs. 16 from Vaidya. He did not ask Date for dakshina, as he was evidently not disposed to give it. There was a young Marwadi girl that was hankering after fruit and asked Baba for "orange." Baba by his own powers knew that Date had kept back some oranges at the Wada and brought only the remainder to be offered at the Mosque and so asked Date to go and get the oranges. But Date was assertive and said that the fruit was retained by him for "Faral," i.e., his own light meal on the Ekadasi day. He declined to part with it, despite Baba's request. Baba did not press his request further.

During our stay, Baba revealed his interest in me and my family. When H. S. Dixit, Jog and Dabolkar were present. He told them, "I had been to this man's house"—and here he pointed to me—"for a meal. He did not give me Bendi Baji." My mind darted back at once to the Sadhu who in 1909 at the time of my brother's operation was dining with us. And I felt assured

that in the form of one Sadhu or another, Baba was interested in our welfare and helping us even in 1909, unknown to ourselves. Later, I told those gentlemen of the "Bendi Baji" which my sister-in-law had first failed to serve the Sadhu on that occasion. That Sadhu appeared to be an entirely different man from Sai Baba. I saw him also on the two or three days following the operation at Dahanu and had excellent opportunities of observing him at close quarters. He went away from Dahanu and was not seen again thereafter.

Baba was declaring in 1912 to me that he was the same Sadhu or was in that Sadhu despite external differences in appearance, caste, etc. That Sadhu was a Hindu; rather dark or brownish, and had a fairly long beard such as was never on Baba's chin. He looked more like you (B. V. N. Swami) than like Sai Baba.

I asked Baba about the result I would have in my examination. He said अल्ल मालीक है and placed his palm वरद हस्त on my head. I passed that examination.

The impressions I received at this first visit were in danger of being blotted out on the last day. That morning we found Baba was in tearing rage, at the Mosque—for no reason that any one could make out. He was jumping about the floor of the Mosque. His eyes were red and for fifteen minutes he kept every one in terror of him and none dared to approach him. That made us doubt again if the Station Master's view that Baba was a mad man was not right after all. At last, Baba cooled down and we approached him for leave to go away from Shirdi. He gave us Udhi and leave.

In 1912 Baba gave me another blessing (unasked). I was then employed at Dahanu (Thana District). It is not easy to get a transfer from Mofussil service to Metropolis service. But Baba said in 1912 "*Come to Bombay for service.*" In 1918 this prophecy or blessing had its fulfilment or effect by my being transferred to Bandra, *i.e.*, Bombay Suburban District.

The breach of duty that Baba pointed out, *viz.*, being absent from office without leave of my superior, the Mamlatdar, was noticed by the latter, Mr. B. V. Dev. But, providentially his order was merely that if I were to do so again I would be punished.

After this first visit I was going often times to Shirdi. On one occasion, (*i.e.*, in 1913) as I was starting, Haribhav M. Panse met me. He had been convicted for misappropriation and sentenced to imprisonment but had been just then let out on bail pending his appeal. He was going up for the appeal which was to be heard that day or the next and he told me to entreat Sai Baba's aid on his behalf. "Tell him that I am in trouble and that I am innocent," he said. I went to Shirdi and before I could communicate the message, Baba himself spoke about it. It was at the early morning Arati (Kakada) at the Chavadi. Baba was in a very angry mood. He then told me, "Tell him that he need not have any anxiety and that he *will* be acquitted in the appeal." When I returned from Shirdi, I met Panse and told him of Baba's reply. At that time he informed me that he had indeed been acquitted.

When I was at Shirdi, about this time, (*i.e.*, in 1913 or so) Baba made an observation that *we*

should not trust mad men. This common place or truism appeared to have no reference to or significance for me. But what happened in 1914 showed that it was not a truism, but a warning to me.

I was Treasury Master in 1914 at Dahanu. I was engaged in my daily Pooja at home worshipping Sai Baba's photo, Gods, etc. One Ramakrishna Balawant Panse who was deranged in his intellect was standing at the door of the cuisine, a little distance from my worship room. He was thought to be rather harmless; and none minded him. Suddenly the man flew at me and grasped my neck with both his arms and tried to bite my throat saying, "I will drink your blood." Instantaneously, with one hand I held the उदरणी strong metallic spoon (used for Pooja) and thrust that and my finger into his mouth. The spoon struck in his throat and the man was biting away my finger with his teeth. With the other hand I tried to extricate my neck from his hands. My mother also rushed in to help. Meanwhile I lost consciousness. After sometime and by some remedial applications I recovered consciousness; his nails had dug into the flesh of my neck and he had very nearly strangled me to death. The injury on my fingers also was healed. When next I went to Shirdi, Baba addressed Anna Chinchnikar and said (pointing to me):—

Anna: **If I had delayed an instant, then this man would have indeed perished. The mad man had seized with his hands his very throat. But I extricated him. What is to be done? If I do not save my own children, who else will?**

On 31-3-1915 we had a very thrilling encounter. Myself, Santaram Moreswar Panse and some others were travelling in a bullock cart at night in a dense jungle. We were at the Ranshet Pass. It was known to be infested with **tigers**. It was a dark night. Suddenly our bulls took fright and were stepping backwards. Luckily they were not driving the cart sideways. In that narrow pass, if our cart had swerved a little to the side, cart, bulls and ourselves would have fallen down a steep ravine and perished. Santaram showed me by pointing his hand in front what the trouble was. In front of our carriage we saw the gleaming eyes of a tiger on the road. It was couchant and faced us. Panse to save the cart from being pushed into the ravine wished to get down to place a big stone or stick as a brake to block the wheel going back and asked me to hold the reins of the bulls. I held them and roared aloud "Hail Sai Baba : Run, Sri Sai Baba (to our aid)." Others also began to shout and the tiger got frightened and ran away passing by the side of our cart. My faith in Baba and the courage he infused into me by making me call out his name thus saved the situation.

In 1915, after this, I started to go to Shirdi. At the station one V. S. Samant gave me a cocoanut with two annas to buy candy, etc., to be presented to Baba. I went and bowed to Baba and gave the cocoanut but forgot all about the two annas. When I asked Baba for leave to go, he said "Yes. Go *via* Chitali but *why* keep back a poor Brahmin's (i.e., my) two annas."

माझे गरीब ब्रह्मणा चे दोन आणे कां टेवतोंस ? I was at once reminded by this hit and I gave him the two annas entrusted to me by Samant. Again I prayed for

leave and he said laughing, "You may go now. *Whatever you undertake to do, do thoroughly. Else do not undertake it.*"

Once when I was at Shirdi, Sankar Rao (Balkrishna Vaidya) came there. Baba asked him for Rs. 16 dakshina. He pleaded want of money. A little later, Baba asked him for Rs. 32. Again he put forward the same plea. A little later Baba asked him for Rs. 64. Then we told Baba we were not rich enough to pay such large sums. Then Baba said collect the amount and pay. This proved to be a prophecy. Sometime later, *Baba fell ill*. A *Saptha* was celebrated and it had to be followed by a grand feast to be given to all comers on a large scale. Moneys had to be collected. At the bidding of Dabolkar, Sankar Rao and I started with the hat in hand. The collection then made by us totalled exactly Rs. 64 and it was sent up.

I gave Baba's Udhi to Ravji Sakharam Vaidya to apply to his daughter "Moru" who was having "Plague" fever. It subsided.

My father was something of a doctor. Parasuram Apaji Nachne, a Talati, had longstanding illness. My father and other medical men despaired of his recovery. But by vows and prayers to Baba and burning *Udbatti* before his picture with a perpetual ghee lamp he recovered his health. When I and S.B. Vaidya went to Baba in 1915, the latter presented silver padukas to Baba with a view to get them back again for his worship. But Baba presented them to me. I thought it but right that they should go to Vaidya and gave them to him. But on Madhava Rao Deshpande's intervention they were again trans-

ferred to me. Vaidya had another pair of silver padukas. Baba himself asked Vaidya for that pair and presented that also to me, saying "*Keep this and do Pooja.*" I said that was Vaidya's property and must go to him. Baba said "Keep it for the present, you can give it to him later." I kept it then and later presented one pair to Vaidya.

Adhering to chronological order, I may mention one instance of Baba's justice and fairplay, in which he plucked the feathers off Orthodox Intolerance. In May 1915, I went to Shirdi accompanied by my mother-in-law and others. We put up at the "Sathe Wada" (as it was then called, since then it has changed hands and become Navalkar Wada) and Dada Kelkar was living in part of the premises. When my mother-in-law was cutting onions for our meal, Dada Kelkar, an orthodox Brahmin, who abhorred onion got irritated and fell foul of her. She took his abuse very much to heart. A few hours later, Dada's grand-daughter was crying on account of severe pain in her eyes and he went to Baba for relief.

Baba then told him to foment the eyes with onion.

Dada asked "Where am I to get onion?" Baba always kept some onion with him and perhaps Dada hoped to get his supply from Baba. But that just arbiter was keeping some designs up his sleeve and told Dada "Get it from this Ayi, *i.e.*, mother," pointing to my mother-in-law. Baba was giving her the chance of relieving her pent up feelings and taking noble revenge by returning good for evil. She told Baba that Dada had been abusing her that very morning for using onions in preparing her meal, and that she would not care to give him

anything—but if it was Baba's order that she should give him onions, she would. Baba ordered the gift and she had her grand revenge of doing good to one who had so recently lacerated her feelings.

It was in the same year that my mother-in-law was anxious to get Baba's blessing, to obtain progeny for me. A few children were born before that but they died when quite young. So at her request, Madhav Rao Deshpande took my wife to Baba and wanted Baba to give her a cocoanut as a gift and throw it into her *Padar* (*Mundani* or end of her cloth). Then Baba's eyes brimmed with tears as he gave the cocoanut to my wife; and he bade me sit at his feet and massage his legs. As I was doing so, he made passes with his hand over my back. I felt very grateful for his kindness and I referred to the madman's attempt to murder me and to Baba's photo being with me at the time as the explanation for my narrow escape. Baba merely remarked, "*Allah Malik Hai. God is the Lord, i.e., He orders all things.*" Then Baba and I embraced each other.

Baba showed me once again how considerate he was towards all his devotees and how strongly he was against one *devotee teasing or interfering with another*. One day Baba said "My stomach is aching." "Mavusi," the strong lady that I have already mentioned, brought a red hot brick and placed it on Baba's abdomen, *i.e.,* above his Kupni, and retained it in that position for about ten minutes. I felt very much for Baba, as I was shampooing his feet at that time, and thought her service an instance of "cruel kindness." Then she removed the brick and began pressing Baba's sides with her hands with great violence. I could not

endure the sight, and I told her to be more gentle as Baba would suffer. Baba at once ordered me to get away. I did.

That night, about 8 P.M., I went to the Masjid and asked Baba to give me some *Anugraha*. "What *Japa* shall I make?" I asked. Baba replied, "*Go to Devpur (a village 20 miles off Kopergaon) and begin worshipping the stones there which your ancestors worshipped.*"

Later on, I returned to Dahanu and asked my father what Baba's words might import. Then my father gave me an account of our ancestral worship of the images at Devpur.

Baba Prayag, my ancestor, five degrees removed, had no issue till he was 60 years old. He learnt that issue was often obtained by others by the grace of a saint then living, named Baba Bhagavat (who was a disciple of Eknath Maharaj) and that B. Bhagavat could be seen at Trimbak on those rare occasions when he would go to see the Nivritti Nath Shrine there. B. P. went there and obtained his grace and blessings for issue with a cocoanut. Thereafter, *i.e.*, at the age of 61, B. P. got a son, whom he named Krishna Rao. Baba *Bhagavat* took that child, when it was but one year old to Devpur and gave it a hand-written copy of Jnaneswari. (This identical copy is now produced. Note. Just as it is produced, some music is heard passing in the street). Whenever this copy is taken out some auspicious signs are always found attending. From that time forward, every member of our family in his generation takes Upadesh from a member of that Guru's line. This fact, it is, that made Sai Baba give me the above answer. (At that time I did not know all these

facts. But my father to whom I communicated the answer of Baba narrated these facts to me).

In 1916, by Baba's grace, I was saved from a watery grave. There was Plague at Dahanu and I had daily to cross a creek between my house and my office. One day I returned from the office very late and there was no ferry boat. I then took a Toni (Tamil "Thoni" or Canoe) with a boy to paddle, and it got upset in the middle of the creek. I had swerved just a bit but that was enough to make the little canoe capsize. From the time it capsized I had my Dhyana of Sai Baba. The boy who was rowing or paddling the canoe was a good swimmer and a resourceful lad. He asked me to hold on to a rope that was above water connecting a buoy with a ship which was at a little distance from us. I caught it and with its help kept my head above water. The boy hallooed to the ship and the shipmen sent us a boat and saved us.

In 1919, I had a son born to me ; and this was the first son born after Baba gave my wife the cocoanut, with blessings from his mouth and with tears in his eyes. We named him *Kaluram*. To explain Baba's tears, a few facts about *Kaluram*'s short life of eight years may be mentioned. He was born under the constellation *Moola*. When the boy was only three years old he was always repeating the mantra "Ram Hari Ram." It was in 1921, i.e., when he was entering on his third year, the effect of *Moola* was seen. His mother, i.e., my first wife, died. No doubt the deeply sympathetic heart of Baba saw her coming end when he gave her the "blessing" (?) for a child to be born under *Moola*. Anyhow, one might suppose that there was the mitigation of the sorrow in having brought

a saintly infant prodigy into existence. But see what followed even in that matter. The boy was stunning the imagination of all that became acquainted with him. A pious and learned neighbour, named Hegde, watched him and declared that he was an incarnation of that playmate of Sri Krishna on whose back the latter got up to invade curd-pots. The boy himself stated occasionally "Krishna used to tease me. I caught hold of Hari's leg and pinched them. I looked up. Hari (who was standing above me) upset the curd-pot over my face. Then the lady of the house turned up, etc." The boy sometimes anticipated Hegde's daily study of "*Hari Vijaya*" and declared what stories or incidents formed the subject-matter of the portion to be read on the particular day by Hegde. I saw him one day seated in a corner, with his head covered by a cloth. He was motionless and steady like one immersed in Yoga. His eyeballs were upturned, but the cloth over his head that was worn like a cowl hid the eyes from my view. I lifted the cloth and asked him why he was covering his head. He said he was always doing so. Asked why he went on with his course of Sadhana, he laughed. His precocity surprised me greatly. Once he asked me to get for him the latest special issue of a journal (Sandesh). When that was brought, the first picture on it was Sri Krishna's encircled by the Pranava ॐ. Kalu cut out that picture and stuck it on the wall. Then there was the advertisement of "His Master's Voice" records with the picture of the dog before the gramophone. Kalu's interrogation thereon was typical of him.

Kalu: What is this?

I: It is the advertisement of a phonograph.

He: It is a special message of Krishna.

I : What is the special message ?

He : What is the dog hearing ?

I : The music played by the plate.

He : The dog hears his master's voice.

See the dog—so steady from head to tail, intently listening.

We must be equally firm and steady.

See how I sit. You also should sit like that and listen, and then you will hear Baba's voice.

I : How do you know Baba's voice ?

He : I know. I will not tell you. Experience it yourself.

In addition to his oral Japa of "Ram Hari Ram," Kaluram was going on writing that mantra in chits and a quantity of them were with us. When Upasani Baba came to Andheri, he said he wanted such chits and they were handed over to him. In 1924 Gadgi Baba came over to my house to see this boy.

In 1926, Kalu had dropsy and low fever. We gave him only Babā's Udhi. The disease continued for a while. On Kartik Sudha Ekadasi (so piously celebrated by thousands of pilgrims at Pandharpur and other Vishnu Sthalas), Kaluram approached his end. He called me to his bedside and asked for Jñaneswari. It was at once produced. He himself opened it and picked up the XIII Chapter. At that time I was feeling heavily the sadness of the approaching end, the bitterness that we had to part with such a son. But Kalu cheered me up and said, "What is there to cry for? Read this (Ch. XIII). Read it aloud for me. I am going to-day."

My heart was sinking under a load of grief and I could not read it. Then he kept the book in front of him and breathed his last. A fitting termination this departure on Kartik Ekadesi, was for such a life. But yet how sad was such an early death: No wonder that Baba wept in 1918 when he gave the cocoanut and clearly perceived that such an early death was to crown such a life.

As for the continuance of my line, by Baba's blessings, that was made secure. In 1922, *i.e.*, one year after Kaluram's mother died, my parents were arranging for my second *marriage*. A choice had to be made between a girl that would bring some wealth or pecuniary contribution with her and a poor girl. The proposal of the first girl that would bring in Rs. 600 was being considered by my father. I did not favour it. Baba came in my mother's dream and said to her "Do not accept this girl in marriage for your son." In the same dream my mother saw another girl. A little later the uncle and guardian of a poor girl offered her hand in marriage to me. I referred him to my mother. She saw the girl and found it was the very girl she had seen in the above-mentioned dream. This settled the question and the latter girl was married to me in 1922, and several children were born of this marriage and with Baba's blessings are getting on well. "Baba's blessings" is no empty formal phrase. I will cite several instances to show how he has guarded them and saved their lives as he has saved mine (at least twice, as already mentioned by me).

In 1926, my son, Sainath *alias* Hareswar, was eight or nine months old. Kaluram had crackers and Bengal matches. One of my children threw

away a lighted match. It fell on Sainath and his clothes caught fire. He wore a cloth beneath his waist and a frock next to the skin. Both these caught fire. The children did not realise the seriousness of the situation and raised no alarm. My wife was outside the house engaged with something. Suddenly a Fakir appeared before her and pointing his arm and finger towards the terrace on which the children were playing, said "See what is going on there." My wife at once went inside and noticed the fire on the child's clothes. With great presence of mind and resourcefulness, she ran to the child, seized the clothes and rolled them between her palms and thus boldly extinguished the fire. The front half of the frock from bottom to the neck was burnt out and part of the nether cloth also. But the child (Sainath) came off entirely scatheless. Though the frock worn next to the skin was burnt out, his skin had not been burnt, nor was his nether portion burnt. This complete safety was evidently due to the same cause as the sudden appearance of the Fakir. The Fakir had also suddenly disappeared. When she came out after extinguishing the fire, there was no trace of the Fakir. Who could the Fakir be, how had he known the *fire accident* the very moment it happened and why should he be at the trouble to watch over the children and fetch their mother to save them at the nick of time?

In 1928, Sainath, then two years old, had an accident. As usual he was running about; and one day he *fell down* the stairs. There was a heap of the debris at the bottom. I ran up and was surprised to see him standing without any injury at all. He told me "Do not fear. *Baba bore me up.*"

In 1932, Sainath gave his younger brother, Vasudev, a ring and the latter stuffed it into his

mouth instinctively. The ring went down *into the throat* and stuck there. There was an alarm and for nearly one hour every one in the house was excited and medicaments were tried to induce the throat or stomach to throw out the ring. Finally, I took Sai Baba's Udhi and put it in the child's mouth. Then inserting my finger deep within his mouth. I felt the ring and pulled it out.

In 1934, the same child Vasudev had measles, pneumonia and an abscess on the chest. He was getting weaker and weaker. The doctor was afraid to operate on the abscess on account of the weakness. I applied antiphlogistine over the abscess. The abscess was opened. It was a wide open wound. The doctor would not help me. So I relied upon my doctor, Sai Baba, and trusting in him put a bit of his Udhi into the wound. The Deputy Collector, Vasant Rao Madhav Jadhav, (now D. C. at Poona) asked me whether I was confident of a cure and within what time the gaping wound would be cured? I answered "In 24 hours." That night, Baba appeared in my dream and said, "Why did you say '24 hours?' You should have said 'Immediately.'" I apologised for my mistake in the dream itself. Next morning, the wound was healed up. Jadhav wondered and wanted Baba's Udhi and blessing for his own son aged $4\frac{1}{2}$ years who was down with pneumonia. I gave him the Udhi on the sixth day of that child's fever. The very next day the fever stopped, though the attendant doctor stated that the fever would run its course for 9 days (*i.e.*, that it would last 3 days after I gave the Udhi). Jadhav sent up his thanks offering of Rs. 7 to be sent to Sri Sai Baba's Samasthan.

In 1935, *i.e.*, last year, milk was being boiled on my stove. Anand, my two-years-old child, came running up, stumbled over a stick and fell upon the milk and stove. Just fancy what should happen in such a case. One would expect his skin to be scalded by the boiling milk and clothes to catch fire. But here the milk was dashed down on one side and the stove on the other side; and the child lay between the two neither scalded, nor catching fire on his clothes.

This year, *i.e.*, 1936, Vasudev and his younger brother rummaged among the contents of an almyrah and found a box full of what they thought to be peppermint lozenges. Vasudev ate some and gave some to his younger brother. The taste was unpleasant and they did not eat much. But what little was eaten made Vasu smart. His tongue was protruding. My wife inserted her finger into his mouth and extracted what she believed to be *chunam*, *i.e.*, lime. We were then shown by Vasu the packet or box of "Sweetmeats" that he had been consuming. It was "Pharoah's snakes"—the piece of fire works that burn out forming ashes that lengthen and wind about in the form of snakes. We then took him to the doctor who administered an emetic, which did not act. Then I gave Baba's Udhi and Tirtha—which acted at once and resulted in his vomiting out all the poisonous stuff he had swallowed. After all this was over, Vasudev mentioned that he had given the peppermint to his two-year-old younger brother. Evidently the latter ate but little, as there was no trouble. But to expel what little he might have swallowed, we administered *our* emetic, *viz.*, Udhi and water with Baba's name to him and he had a good vomit.

A cashier in an office was in trouble last year about Rs. 3,500 which was not accounted for. A friend advised him to go to me and he came. That cashier disliked Baba, as Baba was a 'Mahomedan.' But when he came to me, I told him that his sole sanctuary was the Sai Mandir at Shirdi, and that he should go there and make a heartfelt apology and appeal for help. He went there, got a photo of Baba and with the help of Sagun Naik placed it at the Samadhi, prayed there and came back with the photo. Things then began to brighten up. He was allowed eight days time to pay up the Rs. 3,500. He went up, got money and paid it. The matter was closed. There was neither dismissal nor prosecution.

Similar help was rendered by Baba in another case. Mr. V. C. Chitnis after his dismissal from service came to me. I told him to cast his burden on Sai Baba and make an appeal at the Shirdi Mandir for help. He went to Shirdi and later he was reinstated in service.

I shall mention what help Baba gave to members of my family, for *Sadgati*, i.e., at or after death.

My parents were devotees of Sai Baba. My mother was aged seventy in 1926 when she died. She kept Sai Baba's photo to the last in front of her. As the end was nearing, she asked me to read *Vishnu Saharsanama* aloud by her side, and I did. Then with "Ram Ram" on her lips, she passed away.

My second wife passed away in 1929 and I was anxious to do everything necessary to secure *Sadgati* for her soul. So I wished to take her bones and ashes to Nasik and dispose of

them there with proper ceremonies. But I was beset with difficulties. My father was ill. I had amidst my feeling of bitter loss at her departure, to make sure of the funds needed and the steps necessary, of which I had no idea. I took a sum of Rs. 80 and leaving a child of 3 years at home, started by train for Nasik. At Victoria Terminus, I found I had a fellow passenger who took enormous trouble for me and extended his sympathy and help even before the train started.

He : Where are you going ?

I : Nasik.

He : Why do you carry no bed ? The nights are chill.

I : I find no necessity. I am in no mood to mind these things. It is eight days since my wife died leaving a three years old son to be taken care of by me.

He asked me to wait. He called out to a friend and got a blanket and a bedsheet for me.

I : How can you get these things so quickly ?

He : Our quarters are very near. It is the Bombay Arts School. Have this cigar please.

I (accepting the cigar) : What is your name ? May I know who you are ?

He : I am a peon in that school. My name is Ganapathy Shankar—you may go to sleep now. Have no anxiety. I am also going to Nasik. I shall wake you up when we reach Nasik.

I : What takes you to Nasik ?

G. S : Simply to see Nasik. My Saheb is gone to Simla and I get this chance of seeing Nasik.

Then I lay down.

G. S : "Do take good care of your money ; or if you like, I will keep it for you, if you give it to me, in this steel trunk of mine.

Then I handed over my 80 rupees to him and went to sleep. At Ghoti Station, near Nasik, he woke me up. We washed ourselves and took tea. He paid for me also. At Nasik Road Station, we got into the bus. Then

G. S : Do not go to Bhatji, *i.e.*, a priest yourself. I will settle everything for you. Do not trouble yourself.

Then he attended on me and attended to everything as a peon would do, till the end of the twelfth day ceremony. Throughout the proceedings he showed his special knowledge of the ceremonies, *e.g.*, he told the priest to take *Pinda* first to Ramkund. He told me to retain in my grip the bones I brought, immersed in the waters of the Godaveri at Ramkund till the close of the ceremony. The bones should be left in a particular hollow there and kept in position by pressure of the hand to prevent their being washed away by force of the current. My surprise was that even as I kept them they were quickly dissolving as though they were sugar candy. On the twelfth day, he got a wire requiring his presence back at Bombay. He accounted to me for every pie he had received from me. He took me to the chief temples at Nasik. A Sanyasi teacher at one of the temples recognised him and to him he showed the wire. My priest said that G. S. was a man of extraordinary cleverness, *e. g.*, when the priest started ceremonies without the worship of Ganesha (considering it unnecessary for inauspicious

ceremonies), G. S. interposed and bade him start it and when the priest still entertained doubts, made him refer the matter to a learned authority who agreed with G. S.

He parted from me at Nasik that day and promised to call at my place, *i.e.*, Andheri. He gave me his name and address. After my return home, seeing that my beneficent friend did not turn up I went to the address given, *viz.*, "G. S., Peon, Bombay Art School" and made inquiries and asked his fellow peons about him. They all said there was no such person at all known to them. The principal (the "Sahib") also said the same.

Who was this 'man' that took such enormous pains (without any remuneration or prospect of it) and gave me such splendid help in securing *Sadgati* for my wife at Nasik by proper performance of all the ceremonies? Who can it be—but Sai Baba?

In 1927 I went to Shirdi for Chowla, *i.e.*, tuft ceremony of Kaluram. Then Baba's direction to me to go to Deopur which I had neglected till then was again stressed on me, through another saint who had come up to Shirdi. That was Nanu Maharaj or Sripad Narsoba Panchlegaonkar, aged only fifteen. He asked me without any intimation to him of what or who I was or what Baba had told me about *anugraha* (initiation),

"Have you been to Deopur?"

I was taken aback. I answered in the negative.

N: Why?

I: There is no one at Deopur older than myself (in my Guru's line) for me to accept as my Guru and get *anugraha*.

N: What of that? My Guru is younger than I. His name is 'Doi Pode' and your Guru's name is Bhagavat.

Sri Narsoba promised to show me his Guru later.

Accepting this reminder, I carried out Sai Baba's order and went to Deopur and accepted *anugraha*.

I had never met Sri Narsoba before.

Next year, I learnt that Narsoba was arriving at Bombay V. T. As his train steamed in and came to a stop, from his compartment he beckoned to me as I stood amidst a crowd and showed me his Guru, an eight-year-old youth, Sripad Ramakrishna Doi Pode. Sri Narsoba is doing "Sudhi" work; I have not met him after 1928. His Guru is still a student (for Matriculation Exam.) at Guntur (Madras Presidency).

I will close this long account with one instance of Baba's response to my prayer for help to strangers. On 3-12-1923 I was seated in my house at Andheri, facing the road. One Mr. Noel was driving his car along that road. A little girl, the daughter of Vittal, was knocked down by the car. As I saw it I prayed, "Baba, save her." The car stopped. I went down and picked up the child and took her to the hospital. The stopping of the car before the child was crushed was a miracle. The break in the car was not working. Then on examination it was found, though the break was not put on, a stone had somehow got into the gear and that was how the car suddenly stopped in time. Looking at the injuries to the girl, the Sub-Assistant Surgeon

feared they would prove fatal. But I told him "Sai Baba would save her." She continued as an in-patient in the hospital for fifteen days and she recovered her health ; but her power of speech was not restored. That continued to be her condition for nine months. Then Das Ganu came to Andheri and I told him the facts. He told me to give her Baba's Udhi again for restoring her speech. I again gave her Udhi. The next day she began to speak. This was most marvellous. She is alive now and speaks very well.

Baba kindly gives me opportunities of doing service to others. In 1926, he appeared to me in a dream and bade me go and tell Mr. K. G. Kothare (Bar-at-Law) "not to do what he was proposing to do." Despite the vagueness of the message, I went to him and delivered the message. He thanked me for it and informed me that it referred to the step he had been intending to take. He wanted to give up his *Grihastasram* and become a *Sanyasi*. He gave up the idea, at that time.

(Read over and admitted to be correct).

V

23rd SEPT. 1936, DADY AGIARI ST., BOMBAY

Sri Narayan Asram, Sanyasi and disciple of Vedaśrama Swami (Taraka Muth, Durgaghat, Kashi), residing at Vaman Muth, Gangapuri Wai, (Satara District), aged 58, says :

I knew Sai Baba, *i.e.*, heard the name and the greatness of Sai Baba in 1910 from Das Ganu Maharaj's kirtans. I asked him "Is Sai Baba living?" He said "Yes, at Shirdi." In five days of that, I went to Shirdi and saw Sai Baba. In six months thereafter, I paid Baba nine visits. I often went to him in later years also. I was then in service in the Customs Department and continued in it till 1926 when I retired on pension after 31 years service. 1927-1930 I spent in "Narmada Pradakshina" In 1931, I took Sanyas changing my former name "Toser" to the present one. I came first under a Guru's influence in 1895 whom I saw in a dream. When I went to Shirdi in 1910 and had my contact with Sai Baba, I found that he was the same as the Guru who gave me first inspiration (without any words) in my dream in 1895. Then I passed after 1918 into the charge of Vasudevanand Saraswati of Garudeshwar on the banks of Narmada near Nandod (in Gujerat). Though Vasudevanand Saraswati left the flesh in 1915 he had connection with Baba. I believe that Baba has left me in his charge. So, Vedaśrama Swami of Kashi, Taraka Muth, Durgaghat, gave me Deeksha in 1931.

I mostly stay at Wai.



NARAYAN ASRAM



Rao Bahadur S. B. DHUMAL

As for my internal progress and Sai Baba's influence on me, it is hardly a thing to be described.

Sai Baba had different ways of dealing with different people. He was the centre and to each man he darted a separate radius. Most cared for external things only and hardly any came to him for the highest spiritual benefit of Atma Nishta.

Hari Sitaram Dixit, Chandorkar and Dabholkar were probably those who came close enough to him to receive high teaching.

Yet it is a question, if any of them got into Atma Nishta or anywhere near that. Baba had made Dixit read Eknath's two works, as he was but a beginner in the religious field and had to develop his bhakti (devotion) chiefly. Of course, immediate proximity was not needed for development under Baba. When I was at Shirdi, I would mostly go and sit away by myself in the (Sathe) Wada and not be at the Mosque. Even at the Wada, one is under Baba's direct influence.

As for *Baba's own state*, that is a thing one can get a glimpse of from some facts. Baba had a way of *touching* (with his palm) *the head of the devotee* who went to him. There was no *adhi-kari* evidently to receive everything Baba could give and thus there was none to succeed to his position.

But his touch did convey certain impulses, forces, ideas, etc. Sometimes he pressed his hand heavily on the head as though he was crushing out some of the lower impulses of the devotee. Sometimes he tapped, sometimes he made a pass with the palm over the head, etc. Each had its own effect—making remarkable difference in the sensations or feelings of the devotee.

Baba's touch was one means. Apart from that, he would **invisibly operate** on the nature of the devotee and effect a great change in him.

He graciously conveyed to me without any words, the feeling that differences (between various souls, etc.) i.e., all differences were unreal, that the One real thing is that which underlies all. This was after my first visit—in 1913 or 1914 perhaps. But Baba never spoke out this truth so far as I know. Obviously there was no competent *adhikari* who had to be spoken to in that way.

I have not given out my experiences, though Mr. Dixit and Mr. Dabholkar asked me for it.

I have never heard Baba utter *Mahavakyas* or say things out of Sankaracharya's *Atmabodha* or *Viveka Chudamani* or anything on those lines.

When I went first in 1910 no crowds had come. Baba was mostly silent then. Very soon Bombay crowds began to pour upon Shirdi. Then Baba was being pressed into new habits and ways. Devotees to suit their own tastes *forced numerous forms and observances on Baba* and made him a mere man shining with the aid of the shows they arranged for him. His real greatness shone by itself without forms and rigid observances and pomp, and was shut out by these. These reduced Baba to earthly grandeur.

Baba spoke to me only a few words—but they were direct and plain words. He did not talk to me in parables. He began to employ parable in teaching the numerous people that flocked to him.

There is a great deal of parallelism between Sri Sai of Shirdi and Akkalkote Maharaj; and that

can be found by reading the life of Akkalkote Maharaj. The latter also hardly ever spoke of Advaitic realisation. He was a greater *Karmata*, (i.e., follower of rigid Karmamarga, the path of works) and insister on forms than Sai Baba.

Baba was trying to push people just a few steps above their level.

Das Ganu told me that Baba referred to one *Daji Maharaj*, a saintly grihastha Brahmin, who lived at the village Dangar Takidi near Nanded (in Nizam's State) as "*my brother*." That Maharaj passed away in 1934. He was practising *Gayatri Purascharan*. He said one day in 1914 at Dangar Takidi "Yesterday, Sai Baba came here in the *form of Maruti* and there was a great rumbling noise at his arrival."

My father and I are Maruti worshippers. I installed a new Maruti image and got a temple built and consecrated in 1918 at Ville Parle, Hanuman Street. I had to name the God, and I called it *Sai Hanuman*, remembering that Sai was Hanuman. I gifted that temple by deed to my brother. The very day this temple was consecrated at Ville Parle, Baba gave, it seems, Rs. 25 to a Brahmin named Vaze and made him perform Satya Narayan at Shirdi. People connect these two events. When I was first visiting Shirdi, I was heterodox and could hardly be taken for a Brahmin. Regard for Samskaras grew on me. I never cared for Siddhis. I seldom attended Baba's Chavadi procession even when I was at Shirdi.

I was desirous of getting *Sanyas* even before I got married. I actually got it only in 1931. But the way was being paved. My mother and wife are living; but I have no issue. Two children

were born and they passed away after a few days of existence on this earth, one in 1900, the other in 1915. Brahmacharya is essential to Sanyasa. The fact that a wife is living in the house is no impediment to my Brahmacharya. If I look upon my mother like any other human being without special attachment, that is no hindrance to Sanyasa. The Samskara of going through *Sanyasa* gave me a great impetus. Sai Baba never spoke to me (or so far as I remember, to anyone else) about the desirability, necessity or disadvantages of a life of Sanyasa. About changes of caste, Ashrama, *Guru*, methods of Sadana, caste observances, etc., he had one and the same advice or prescription "Each must stick to his lot and get on."

(Read over and found correct.)

The Guru after all is a medium, a means to realise your own self. He gives you a push and then you have to exert yourself and go higher and hold to your height. Sai Baba thus was a medium though one responsible for a considerable and momentous advance in my spiritual history. Before, I went to Shirdi, one Vinayak Bhat Shadale (supported by the Kolhapur State) whom I met in 1900 and who had made me read bits of Yoga-Vashishta with zest was also a "medium" for me.

With one help at one time and a second at another, one has to go on steadily and realise the self.

VI

21st MAY, 1936.

Mrs. Manager, Holy City, says :

It is very difficult to describe Sai Baba and our experience of him. But one may talk about somethings relating to him.

My daughter took ill when she was fifteen months old and I was sore distressed. Just then my brother-in-law came back from Shirdi and was sounding the high praise of Sai Baba. I then said that if the child recovered, we should go with our child to Shirdi and pay our respects to Sai Baba. The child recovered and we went up to fulfil our vow.

One's first impression of Sai Baba was derived from his *eyes*. There was *such power and penetration in his glance that none could continue to look at his eyes*. One felt that Sai Baba was *reading him, or her, through and through*. Soon one lowered one's eyes and bowed down. One felt that He was not only *in one's heart*, but in every atom of one's body. A few words, a gesture would reveal to one that Sai Baba knew all about the past, present and even future and about everything else. There was nothing else to do for one, except to submit trustfully and to surrender oneself to Him. And there He was to look after every minute detail, and guide one safe through every turn and every vicissitude of life. He was the **Antaryami**, call Him God or *Satpurusha in Sahaja Sthithi* or what you like. But the overpowering personality was there, and in His presence no doubts, no fears, no questionings had any place and one resigned oneself and found that that was the only course, the safest and best course.

From one's first entry into His presence, one went on getting experience of His power, His all-knowing and *all-pervasive personality*, His *protecting care* that shielded one, wherever one went and at any time whatsoever.

I shall give some instances of his *Antaryamitva* that I personally got or learnt of in the early days of my stay at Shirdi.

Shirdi in those days was a neglected hamlet without any lighting, sweeping and other conveniences of civilisation. It has had some improvement since. But when I was there, the streets and passages were all dark and unlit at night. One night I was walking about. But suddenly and abruptly I stopped. There was no sound or sight to account for my stopping. For some unknown reason I felt I must stop and I did. A little time passed and a light was brought by someone and there Lo, and behold! at the very place where I was to have placed my foot at the next step, there was a serpent lying quiet. Of course, if I had put my foot, the consequences might have been very serious, if not fatal. The light showed what the danger was that I escaped. But I could not have guessed of its existence so near me by the use of my own powers, in the absence of the light. Why and how had I stopped so abruptly and how did the light come in so opportune a moment to show me the danger? The only answer is—the all-seeing and ever-watchful power and protective grace of Sai Baba. He has saved this body of mine from death on many occasions. But these or some of these will be mentioned later on.

To take another instance. We used to go and sit near Sai Baba at his Mosque. Any one could

go up at the usual time, without permission asked of or introduction taken to Sai Baba and bow before him and sit there. On one occasion, as I was seated at a short distance from Sai Baba, there came a leper to the Mosque. His disease was far advanced. He was stinking and he had little strength left in him, so that it was with much difficulty and very slowly, he clambered up the three steps of the Mosque, moved on to the *Dhuni* (fire) and then to Sai Baba and placed his head on Baba's feet. It took so much time for him to take his *Darsana*, and I feeling the stretch from him intensely, hoped he would clear off. At last when he got down slowly carrying a small parcel wrapped up in a dirty cloth, I felt relief and said within myself, "Thank God. He is off." Sai Baba at once darted a piercing glance at me, and I knew that he *read my thought*. Before the leper had gone far, Sai Baba called out and sent someone to fetch him back. The man came. It was again the slow process of his clambering up, emitting foul stretch all the time; and as the man bowed to Baba, Baba picked up that parcel saying "*What is this?*" and opened it. It contained some "*pedas*," (*i.e.*, milk sweets) and Sai Baba took up a piece and gave it to me—to me alone of all present—and asked me to *eat it*. What horror! To eat up a thing brought by the stinking leper! But it was Sai Baba's order, and there was no option but to obey. So I ate it up. Sai Baba took another piece and himself swallowed it and then sent the man away with the remainder. Why he was re-called and I alone was the chosen recipient of his *peda*, none then understood. But I knew full well that Sai Baba had read my heart and was teaching me *valuable lessons*, (*e.g.*, in humility, fraternity,

sympathy, endurance and trust in His Supreme wisdom rather than in my own notions of hygiene and sanitation for saving me from disease).

When we had difficulties to get over, we never had to speak. We had merely to go and sit or stand in his presence. He at once knew, what the matter was and gave a direction exactly meeting our requirements. We had our servant with us at Shirdi. He had acute pain in his lumbar region. My husband went to Sai Baba and was standing. Some others were also present before Sai Baba. Baba suddenly said "*Hallo, my leg is paining. Great is the pain.*" Some one suggested that something should be done to relieve the pain. "Yes" said Baba "*If green leaves are heated and applied over it, it will go away.*" "What leaves, Baba?" was the query by some one. Baba said, "These green leaves near the *Lendi*" (i.e., streamlet). One suggested one leaf and another a different leaf. One finally asked if it was *Korphad* (கோத்துக் கத்தாலை). "Yes" Baba said, "That is it. The leaf has to be brought, split into two, slightly heated over the fire and applied. That is all." At once, my husband knew that this was Baba's kind prescription for our servant. We fetched the leaf and applied it as directed; and the servant was relieved of his pain.

Not only was he present at all places when his physical body was in one place only, say the mosque, but he was also able to do various things with his invisible body.

My eyes have been giving me trouble constantly. On one occasion while I was at Shirdi, they were greatly paining me and water was freely flowing from them. In such a condition I went and sat up before Baba. He looked at me. My eyes

ceased to pain and water. But his eyes were dropping tears. The accurate diagnosis of the disease at a glance was wondrous enough. Still more wondrous was his **curing deep-seated organic disease abruptly and suddenly** without any visible application of remedy or treatment. Scientists or medical men may disbelieve this. But having actually experienced it in my own case and in that of others who came before Sri Sai Baba, I cannot disbelieve such cases and what is most peculiar—the drawing of diseases on to himself by pure will-power.

These wonderful powers and especially this wonderful nature of Sri Sai Baba with his *Antaryamitva*, i.e., *his being inside every creature and every object* animate or inanimate so as to *control all voluntary and involuntary* movements of creatures and objects, throw light on what He occasionally said of himself. “*I am not at Shirdi,*” he would say, while he was at Shirdi. As was frequently said, *he was not confined within the three cubits length of flesh*, bone and blood that people called Sri Sai Baba. He was in every dog, cat, pig, man and woman. While we cannot shake off the idea that we are this physical sheath or the attachment we feel to things connected with it, he was ever free from such narrow ideas or attachments. He seemed to be in or to be the Over-soul, the Super-consciousness, *Sahaj Samadhi*, or *Jnanamaya Sharir* by whatever name we choose to refer to that higher state of his.

One noticeable difference between Sri Sai Baba and other saints struck me. I have moved with other notable saints also. I have seen them in high Samadhi or trance condition entirely for-

getting their body and (of course) effacing the narrow notion of the self confined to the body; and I have seen them later getting conscious of their surroundings, knowing what is in our hearts and replying to us. But with Sri Sai Baba, there was this peculiar feature. He had not to go into trance to achieve anything, or to reach any higher position or knowledge. He was every moment exercising a *double consciousness*, one actively utilising the Ego called Sri Sai Baba and dealing with other Egos in temporal or spiritual affairs, and the other—entirely superceding all Egos and resting in the position of the Universal Soul or Ego; he was exercising and manifesting all the powers and features incidental to both the states of consciousness. Other saints would forget their body and surroundings and then return to it. But Sri Sai Baba always was in and outside the material world. Others seemed to take pains and by effort to trace the contents of others' minds and read their past history. But with Sri Sai Baba this was **not a matter of effort. He was in the all-knowing state always.** Sai Baba was one whom some people could not understand at all. He would talk, *e.g.*, to a hawker about some cloth brought for making *Cupnis*, higgie and haggie like the most inveterate shopper at a bazaar, and beat down the price of the cloth, say from As. 8 a yard to As. 5 a yard and take, say, 40 yds. This made the hasty on-looker conclude that Sai Baba was parsimonious, and avaricious or at any rate attached to wealth. A little later, he (*i.e.*, Sai Baba) would pay the hawker, and then he would sometimes pay four times the price settled. Again the hasty on-looker would conclude that Baba was crazy, touched in the brain, or needlessly ostentatious in

his misplaced charity. In both cases, the hasty judgments would be wide of the mark and the real reasons for Sai Baba's conduct would remain mysterious to all except those whom he meant to enlighten.

It is not merely **his power** that endeared him to his devotees. His **loving care** combined with those powers made Shirdi, a veritable paradise to the devotees who went there. **Directly we went there, we felt safe, that nothing could harm us.** When I went and sat in his presence, *I always forgot my pain—nay the body itself with all mundane concerns and anxieties.* Hours would pass and I would be in blissful unconsciousness of their passing. That was a unique experience—shared, I believe, by all his real devotees. He was all in all and the All for us. We never could think of his having limitations. Now that he has passed away. I feel what a terrible loss it is, as I can no longer pass hours together in blissful unconsciousness of time and affairs at his feet. We feel we have lost our soul; our bodies alone are left to us now.

Yet it would not be true to say that he has altogether vanished. **He is still living now** and we have **ample proof** of his powers and protecting care in many matters off and on; though the assurance we derive from these about his continuance can never compare with the bliss we felt in his presence when he was in the physical body. I shall proceed to give some instances of his active care for us and of the help he has rendered to us after dropping his physical sheath.

I was suffering for over a month during summer of 1915 (?) with a splitting neuralgic head-

ache; we were at Panchgani, a sanatorium, and we tried a number of remedies. It was all to no purpose. I felt I must die. With that feeling, I resolved to go to Shirdi, so that I may have the privilege of dying at Baba's feet; and in spite of some objections raised by my husband at first, we moved on to Kopergaon and came to the river Godavari which we had to cross. It struck me at once that I should bathe in the holy river as anyhow I was going to die soon. A cold bath might increase my pain and accelerate death. Well, so much the better, I thought. I had my bath. Well! Judge of our surprise! The bath over, I came out and the head-ache instead of getting aggravated, left me at once and for ever. That longstanding scourge left me for good by that bath, even though a cold bath when the head-ache was on was previously totally impracticable and a terror to me. This cure was surely due to Sri Sai.

In 1927, when I was six months with child, we, (*i. e.*, our whole family) started for Shirdi; shortly thereafter my child died in the womb, and no delivery followed for days. My features were getting blue. I was clearly having blood poisoned. There was no medical help or mid-wife at Shirdi; we, however, got some medicines from Ahmednagar. They were of no avail. My husband went to Sakori and prayed to Sri Upasani Baba to help me. The latter merely said "*You have the best doctor and best nurse there*, (meaning of course, Sri Sai Baba). Why do you come to me?" The *child remained for days dead in my womb*, and I was unconscious. What happened thereafter and how I was delivered, I do not remember. But my husband told me (Mr. Manager confirms

this) that in my unconscious state, I was speaking and giving directions as to what steps were to be taken besides applying Udhi and Tirth of Sri Sai Baba. These directions were followed and everything inside was expelled (especially later on through glandular swellings). Yet, for one more month I continued unconscious and at last recovered full consciousness and health. This was a clear case of Sri Sai Baba's help (to save my life) nine years after he entered into Mahasamadhi.

Sri Sai Baba did not found any Math or Institution and therefore left no one to occupy the *Gadi* he sat on.

Sri Sai Baba's qualities shine out of his own conduct and his virtues are worthy of mention. His **kindness** would be amply borne out by the incidents already mentioned. Many other incidents known to and experienced by all who came to him can be mentioned which show that it extended far beyond Shirdi—thousands of miles away even—even to Europe, when his devotees were facing danger in the Great War in 1914-19.

But he was also **Just and Impartial**, while he was kind. If the occasion called for it, he said, one should sacrifice one's own child. His serene impartiality knew no difference between the king and a beggar. All were equal in his eyes. He was never obsequious to the rich and high placed, nor supercilious and contemptuous to the lowly. Revenue Commissioners and Collectors have called to see him, and lower officials in numbers, *e.g.*, D. Os., D. C.s, Mamlatdars, etc. But wealth and position were no special grounds of preference or differential treatment with him.

His **accessibility** to all and at all hours practically was a remarkable feature of his. "*My Darbar is always open,*" he used to say—"at all hours." He had nothing to fear from scrutiny, and nothing shameful to conceal. *All his actions were open and above board.*

Another distinguishing feature of his life was **Freedom from care and anxiety**. *He had no interests to serve or protect, no institutions to seek support for or maintain; no acquisitions to safeguard; no private property to feel anxious about.* Everything got was quickly disposed of. He lived on the begged and freely offered food. He daily collected *Dakshina*—of that a further detail may be given later on. But he spent it freely and liberally. During the last nine years or so of his life, he was daily giving Rs. 110 away to Tatya and Bade Baka. Each day's earnings were depleted in no time. And when he died, he left in his pocket just the amount needed to cover his funeral expenses.

His **self-control** and **equanimity** may be mentioned in this connection. He was far too lofty to care for trivial things. His palate, like his other senses, was so strictly under his control that none ever found him show any trace of desire for anything, so far as I know.

His **generosity** may next be mentioned. Besides Rs. 110 daily paid to some, he would scatter money and gifts. Some would say it was Rs. 300 daily—fancying that untruth or exaggeration is needed to set out Baba's glory. But his greatness needed no such untruth or exaggeration to set it off. A few actual facts would suffice to establish his greatness beyond question. Coming

to the question of his generosity, we may state what we have seen. *Bhajan* parties (Hindus) and Fakirs would come and would be liberally supplied.

His methods of imparting spiritual benefit and his religious ideas were hardly brought to others' notice. He would speak of God as any other religious and pious man might, *i.e.*, rarely, and with feeling. His religious practice was hardly noticeable.

He would sit in the mornings near his Dhuni *i.e.*, fire and wave his arms and fingers about, making gestures which conveyed no meaning to us, and saying...“ Haq ”, *i. e.*, God.

Purity, Strength, Regularity and Self-denial one noticed about him always. He would always beg his food. Even during his illness, he never lay bedridden, but would get up and go round to beg his food. He would beg for food, only in the accustomed quarters and to a limited extent. And out of his begged food, he ate only a little and the rest he would give away.

There may be some who complain that even the ordinary talk of Sai Baba was meaningless *jargon*. So it was no doubt—to *them*—and was intended to be that. “*Jaya Mani Jaisa Bhav, Taya Taisa Anubhav.*” But those who were intended to be benefitted by that talk would find their full and vast significance. He did not want comforts to be provided for him. When the Mosque was sought to be repaired—it was first a rumbling old dirty dilapidated building badly needing repairs,—he objected and put it off. It was by the devotees' insistence and by their conducting the repairs at night when he was sleeping in the Chawadi, that the reconstruction was pushed through.

Besides Upasani Maharaj, we met many noteworthy persons at Shirdi. Radhakrishna Ayi, a Brahmin widow, was looking after the requirements of Sri Sai Baba's Arti, etc. She ordered people to get things and was held in great respect; when we went there in 1915 or so, Sri Sai Baba told us to go to Ayi, and we went to her for accommodation. But Ayi gave it on the strict condition that I should do all the manual labour she might ask of me. I agreed and did the work as required. *Ayi* related the history of my *past life* and had wonderful powers of *thought reading and clairvoyance*. When some unusual order came from Baba that such and such a dish was wanted, she would keep it ready and supply it at once.

When some message came for me, she read off my mind the reply I wanted to give and gave the reply herself. She was deeply devoted to Sri Sai Baba, and rendered great service to his Samsthan. Yet it must be admitted that Ayi had a very sharp tongue and many found her uncompanionable. But Sri Sai Baba put us there to develop our power of *endurance*, perhaps.

Sri Sai Baba's method of giving spiritual help to visitors were not usual ones. There was no *Upadesh Mantra* given. He never talked of Yoga, Pranayam and Kundali. But when anything went wrong to one pursuing some *Marga*, he would come to Sri Sai Baba and would be helped. There was a man who had practised Asan and Pranayam and the poor man's system broke down. He was passing blood in his motions. So he came to Sri Sai Baba and stayed. After a while his health was restored during his stay at Shirdi.



From the left :

1. Rao Bahadur M. W. Pradhan.
2. S. D. Navalkar.
3. Rao Saheb T. Galwankar.
4. S. N. Kharkar (Secy.), Lendigarden.



R. B. Purandhare.

VII

4 MAY, 1936, POONA.

Raghuvir B. Purandhare, s/o Bhaskar Purandhare, aged 60, Brahmin, Deshasth Shukla Yajur Vedi (Kelva Mahim, Thana Dist.—originally) now at Bandra, Retired clerk of G. I. P. Rly., Sainath Ashram, 59-B, Perry Road, Bandra, states :

I heard first of Sai Baba in 1909 and went to see him. I was always desirous of association with Sadhus—saintly people. I heard he was a Saint, so I felt attracted to him. He appeared *in my dream and called me* to Shirdi. At that time my elder daughter (aged then six months) was very ill and so my mother objected to my going. I still persisted in going to Shirdi and I took my wife, that child and my mother with me to Shirdi. I remained there (first visit) for thirteen days. On the third day of my visit, the child got alright. Baba did not permit me to go back till the thirteenth day. I did not ask him about any matter. He told my mother that for *seven centuries*, he (Sai Baba) was connected with me. “*I will not forget him—I will always remember him even if he is away—more than 2000 miles. I will not eat even a bit without him,*” said Baba. Then I started away to Nasik with his permission. We went back to Dadar where I was living. My wife got an attack of cholera and the doctor gave her up as hopeless. I gave Baba’s Udhi and Tirtha to her. **I saw Baba at** the side of Datta Mandir in front of **my Dadar** house and he ordered me to give the

Udhi and Tirtha and so I gave her the Udhi and Tirtha. Half an hour later, she had recovered sufficient warmth and the doctor felt hopeful of her recovery and she recovered. Since then I visited Baba very often and stayed long periods at Shirdi in obedience to Baba's order. Baba would occasionally ask Mr. H. S. Dixit to write to me to go over. I have visited Baba often with Dixit.

I went with no worldly motives, though I was very poor ; I was an orphan.

He told me to continue my previous Upasana. I was and am fond of worshipping Vishnu and of prayers. I continued the same. He asked me several times for Rs. 2 only. Once I asked him what for he asked always for Rs. 2. He then said "*It is not these Rupees I want. I want Nishta (i. e., concentrated faith) and Saburi (patience).*" I replied I had given these—faith and patient trust to him. I had full faith in him and was patiently awaiting progress. He told me to keep up Nishta and to be strict and anxious to fulfil all promises I made. "*You should have truth always with you. Then I will be always with you, wherever you are and at all times.*" I promised to try my best and wanted his help for controlling my mind. "Please get that done by me," I told him. He agreed. All this was at my very first visit. He then told me to buy my own house. I had only Rs. 35 salary. By his grace, in three years time I got the house. At once as soon as he said "Buy," I purchased a plot and began to build and in three years, the building was finished at Bandra—wherein I am still living." "*Do not ask for a single pie from anyone. I will*

help you myself." I was slow at first in building. He threw stones at me for my delay. Nana S.C. and H. S. Dixit offered to build it for me. But Baba would not permit it. I then took a loan from my office of Rs. 500 and then built it. It was a lonely building in a field. Baba said that *he was sitting himself there and guarding me and my young wife.* So I stayed on. I lost my wife in 1920.

He often insisted on my adherence to truth.

I am now joint-treasurer of Baba's Samsthan. After Baba's demise, he would appear to me and order me to go and stay at Shirdi and attend to my duties, re : Samsthan. *I see and recognize his control over me in all details of what I have to do and am doing.*

He directed me to co-operate with Kaka Saheb Dixit (i. e., H. S. Dixit) and told Kaka Saheb to co-operate with me. We two acted together as intimates.

He never talked to me of *Dhyana*.

He never asked any to pray to him only. "*Continue your usual prayers*, be it to Shanker or to Vishnu," he said. He used to give Darshan to the devotee in that form, e.g., S. or V. or Goddess, whichever the devotee adored.

*About 1913—*My mother was long pressing me to go to Pandharpur. I did not mention the matter to Baba to get the necessary permission. Baba himself broached the subject of going to Pandharpur and asked her when she was hoping to start. Then Baba gave my *wife and mother Darshan of himself as Vithoba and Rukmai, at Shirdi Masjid itself.* They were highly pleased

and did not want to go to Pandharpur. He often asked her afterwards when she would go to Pandharpur. She always replied thereafter that her God was there at Shirdi which was her Pandharpur.* When my wife was *ill* once before her delivery, Baba appeared in a dream and applied Udhi and she got up and cried, "Baba is come and applying Udhi fresh and hot from the Dhuni. My body is burning. So get up." She got alright. *Like this, Baba has appeared several times.*

When in great difficulty, I always cried before his picture at home and he would then appear before me at once and comfort me.

Nana S. C. told me of Baba's sending a man with Udhi to help his daughter in her delivery in ill-health at Jamner; that a Tongawalla and horses—not sent by him—fetched the messenger and disappeared. That messenger is a *Ramgir Gosavi still alive at Shirdi*. Baba used to call him Babugir. Nana's two sons, Babu and Bapu, are at Kalyan in "Chandorkar Wada, Kalyan." A daughter of his is living at Poona. Nana was proud of his Sanskrit knowledge. Sai Baba asked him to explain तद्विधिं प्रणिपातेन, etc., and he did. Baba corrected him and explained it better. This is mentioned in (Satcharitra) 2 Ch. on that matter. Ch. 31, 32 & 33 of "Bhakta Lilamrit" by D. G. and 1 Ch. in "Santa Katamrit" by D. G.; and "Bhavartha Deepika" by Dabholkar } deal with Sai Baba.

* "श्रीरडी माझे पण्डरीपुर साई बाबा रमावर" i.e., Shirdi is my Pandharpur and Sai Baba is my Vithoba is part of Shirdi Arati for about 30 years, and is sung by all.

Sri Sai never talked in my presence about Adwaita,* etc. He said always "Allah will protect," "God protects us all, the poor, etc."

गरीबको अल्ला वालीद है. अल्ला अच्छा करेगा.

He never said in my presence that He (Sai) is in all. But he *often identified himself with God.*

He said "जो कोई येमसजीदमे आवे, जिस्का मसजीदमे पायि लगा। उसका बेडा पार है. *i. e., whoever steps into the Masjid, reaches his goal.*" "जैसी जिस्की नियत, वैयसि उसकू बर्कत. *If you act in a good, way, good really will follow.*"

I do not remember his talking of Pranayama, Kundalini, etc., and I never cared for these.

N. S. Chandorkar said, Baba knew Sanskrit. Baba took up Bhagavat, etc., and pointed out passages to people as specially suitable for them. This supports N. S. C.

Baba's fore-knowledge and his own death :

Two years before 1918 Dusserah, *i. e., on Dusserah of 1916* Baba burnt all his *Kupny, langote* and kerchief which he took off saying "This is my *Silingan*" सीमोल्लिंगन. People make Shami worship and present Shami leaves to each

* लोक समजतातकीं आपण सर्व निर्निराळें आहोत, पण हे लोकांत हे चुकीत समजता हे मी तुमच्या मध्ये आहे तुम्ही माजे मध्ये आहे ॥
said Baba.

i. e., People think they are all different from each other. But in this, they are wrong. I am inside you. You are inside me.

This he said about 1913 or 1914. He added "You continue to think in this way. Then you will realise it."

He did not say I am the Absolute Reality. He said that he was inside animals.

other and cross their frontier, as though they were having a successful raid on that day.

When people asked him why he burnt out his clothes on this special holiday, he said, "This is my Simolanghan," *i. e.*, "crossing the border." Two hours later, he wore new clothes, Kupni, langotee and head-kerchief—just as all people wear new clothes on that day. He remained *two hours naked* after burning the clothes he wore and was fierce. People forced him to wear these new clothes then, which were always ready by the dozen.

Baba told Ramachandra Dada Patel (who was ill then) that Tatya Patel—the head of his family—"would go away on this day, after two years." Two years after that, Tatya was seriously ill. Baba also was *ill for a week before Dusserah*; Baba gave up the body and Tatya recovered. So people say that Baba gave up his own life to save Tatya's, *i. e.*, *in exchange* of Tatya's. Such examples we find in the lives of other saints. Even now, Baba is saving life. Here is an instance.

In 1932—I was hopelessly ill of Sciatica and Rheumatism. I then saw *Yama's Dutas* near me. But Sai Baba came up, sat on my bed, took my hand on his knee and prevented Yamadhutas touching me or my bed. I was saved.

I was very passionate. *i. e.*, *hot tempered*. He told me often, "If anybody comes and abuses you or punishes you, *do not quarrel* with him. If you cannot endure it, speak a simple word or two or else go away from the place. But do not battle with him and behave like that," इस्का वादा वादी (बरोबरी) करना नै. "I feel sick and disgusted when you quarrel with others."

He said this to me and to others also several times.

Twelve or fifteen days before S.'s death, he drove away myself and Dixit to Bombay. He told us, "I will go further and you follow me." He gave us permission to go, at the Masjid saying, "*my Turbat (Tomb) will speak; my name also will speak, my mutti, i.e., clay will give you replies*" and told us to clear away. We went away in a bullock cart. He had no disease at the time and we did not expect his death then. He had spoken these words previously and we did not understand their import or importance. Baba never talked in my presence of the goal of life or about Mukti, or Swarga or Paradise.

He said once "*I will take my Kaka in Vimana.*"

In 1926 on an Ekadasi in perfect peace and talking of Baba, Kaka Dixit suddenly expired. Baba has often said to me and to others, "*He who is mine, even if he dies 1000 miles off, I will drag him to myself just as we draw a sparrow with a thread*" and to many people he said "I will not allow my man to get away from me." I saw some devotees dying at Shirdi on Ekadasi. They must have got Swarga thus. Baba, did not to my knowledge, describe Kylas, Vykuntha, Swarga or Moksha.

In 1914-6 or so, Baba was asked by a lady, "When will I get a good birth? चांगला दिवस केवहां ये इल्."

* यं यंवापिस्मरन् भावं त्यजत्यन्ते कलेवरं । तं तमेवैति कौन्तेय
सदा तद्भावभावितः

Sri Krishna says: A dying person becomes what he thinks of in his last moments, having dwelt on it always.

Baba : दुसरा जन्म चांगला येईल *i.e.*, "In your next birth." Next day, she jumped into a well to end her life but was saved. He occasionally foretold the future. I never asked about my own future. "*Taking in Vimana*" means *Sadgati*.

Baba advised one Sagun Meru Naik to put some ghee on the rice and place the rice with ghee in the Dhuni (fire) as an offering and then bring the rest to him. This was in his (Sai Baba's) life-time. Ever since, then, S. M. N. is doing this. Baba ate that food.

That food was brought from his (S. M. N.'s) own house. Previous to that, his Naivedya had no ghee. The Naivedya is still continued by that man. (I have not seen Baba eating animal food). He told Fakirs to utter *Fatya* when Moslems made offerings.

Once he asked me to give him *all* the old copper coins I had. I gave him all I had. I don't know what he did with them.

He had old coins tied neatly in a cloth (so as not to make any jingling noise) and kept them in his side pockets.

He asked me for *Dakshina*. I gave up everything. Once I thought I had nothing left of all my coins. Then Baba said, "*you have still a two anna piece in your pocket. See*" I saw and found it and gave him that also. He used to *completely exhaust the finances* of many in this way. I do not know with what object he did that. Some people asked him *why he wanted so much money*. Baba replied, "*I am not asking of every one. I ask only from the man whom the Fakir (God) points out. But in exchange, I have to give that man ten times the amount which I have*

taken. I do not *take the money for my own use*. I have no family, etc." He used to give the money freely to all people, singers, tamashi, Fakirs, etc. He used to bring lots of fuel for his Dhunimayi—mother fire at the Dwarkamayi".

The tulasi groin (*Brindavan*) at the mosque was put up after 1909, 1911 or 1912. We all helped in that.

The Mantap (or Tin shed) in front of the Masjid was put up in 1912.

G. S. Khaparde explained Panchadashi, etc., in Sathe's Wada. Upasani Baba also attended there. I never attended, as I was busy with works always.

Balvant Ramachandra Noolkar was a retired Sub-Judge. He came, lived and died at Shirdi.

S. B. was seriously ill in 1915. He had *Asthma*. He would not eat anything then.

He was breathing hard; I cried. Baba asked me "Why cry?" I said "I cannot see this state of yours." Baba said, "Don't fear." "*In two or four days I will be alright.*" *Allah has given me this sickness* and he will make me alright, within that period. You need not cry. *I was remembering you the last two or three days and told Kaka to write to you to come.*"

Kaka did not write. S. B. said "Do not write, he is coming himself." In fact, somehow I went up during his illness, not knowing he was ill.

He never took medicines for his illness as a rule. Even during his illness, he was supported and carried by the devotees to his begging place. There he would beg and come back and yet not eat the food. He carried on his usual routine of begging, lendi, etc., even during all that illness.

One day, during his illness, he climbed up the terrace of one house through a staircase, then went over to the next house terrace and over Radhakrishna's. Then a man lifted him up and brought him down to the ground and that man was paid by Baba, 3 or 4 rupees. Baba then said, "*We must not get the labour of anyone for nothing.*" I saw all this. Ambulance-chair was then brought for him, but he never used it.

Malegaonkar Fakir Baba (called Bade Baba, Bade Mia by Sai Baba) was getting most moneys.

In 1920 when my wife was seriously ill of influenza, she felt sorry, she could not attend the *Urs Ramnavami*. That night Sai Baba appeared in her dream and said "Do not cry. I will take you for the Urs." She got slightly better next morning and narrated this to me. Illness still continued and she expired on *Ramnavami* crying "Baba, Baba" to the last.

On the *Ramnavami* flag processions :

10 A. M., 12 Noon : Hindi Kirtan of Ram Janma begins after procession ends and flags are hoisted. Then Moslems begin reading their Quoran. They would take Sai Baba's sandals and go round with it in procession. We, Hindus, would accompany it. They would accompany our flag procession, so in the *Arati* it is recited that *S. B. has taken birth to obliterate difference between Hindus and Mahomedans. यवनस्वरूपी वेद*, etc.

I saw he had a *hole in his ear* and when he bathed naked, he had not been circumscised, so far as I could see. Megha worshipped Sai Baba as "Shanker" standing on one leg. S. B. told him in a dream to draw the figure of a Trisul on the wall of Sathe's Wada in which Megha lived. Megha

did so. A *lingam* was added soon after and is still there, with S. B.'s permission and was worshipped by Megha.

Megha narrated an incident that he wanted to give S. B. a *Gangasnan*, i. e., a bath in the water of Ganges (Godavari). But Baba said, "Wet this head only. Head is the chief. Put a little water on it." But Megha went to Godavari at Kopergaon and brought a tubful of water and poured it all over S. B.'s body. However only the head was wetted. Even the clothes were not wetted. I did not see this.

I have heard S. B. sing a song once or twice.
He would gladly hear people sing to him.

Occasionally, what Sai Baba talked to us, would be found when we went at once to hear *Pothi*, i. e., the reading of sacred works at Sathe's Wada where Bapu Jog read Eknathi Bhagvat. I had several experiences of the sort. I cannot remember details of even one instance.

5TH MAY, 1936

Baba used to be near the Dhuni, early morning facing South, leaning on a post and doing something. I cannot say what. People were not allowed to go near, i. e., even 50 feet. The Sevakarīs could carry on their usual service or work of clearing, replenishing fuel for Dhuni, etc. No others could go so near as they. He used to utter words like *Yade Haq*. They were seldom clear or audible to us at some distance.

Allah Malik, *Allah Vali Hai*, i. e., God is the Master and Protector, he used to say often and at all times.

I once got leave from office at Bandra and from my mother to go. The next evening I had to start for Shirdi. But during the night, Sai Baba appeared to me *in my dream* and said, '*Don't come.*' I wondered why. The morning after I was to have left, there was a strike in the workshop. If I had left overnight as I first proposed, my officers would have suspected me to be at the bottom of the strike and I would be in trouble. Sai Baba saved me from that.

Yeshwantrao, grandson of Raghunath Mukund, Engineer, went with me to Sai Baba in 1911 or 1912 at Ashad Guru Purnima when cholera was raging in Shirdi. He did not wish to return before I did. But Baba told him *to go* and gave him his Udhi. But he did not wish to start. He stayed on though I also told him to go since he had leave of Baba. That night he had an attack of *cholera* to which he succumbed at Shirdi the next morning.

Sai Baba went to Megha, when the latter was dying, shed *tears* there and covered the corpse with flowers and went to the funeral ground where Megha's corpse was burnt. Megha lay ill for two or three days before death. Baba used to give him Udhi then.

Once Sai Baba prevented me from going away to Bombay even after 4-30 P.M. The last train at Kopergaon for Manmad would leave at 6-30 P.M. It was a Bazaar day (Monday). I got a bullock cart. Baba told Rege to go with me. We reached the river at 6-45 P.M. and reached the Kopergaon station at about 7-45 P.M. The train had gone away. There was a *special train*, however, running that night which stopped at 8-15 P.M. at

Kopergaon and took us to Manmad and thence we reached our homes. There were no trains to Manmad from Kopergaon at night, *i.e.*, after 6-30 P.M. in those days.

On the very first occasion of my seeing Baba, he told me to go to "Sala." Mr. Dixit explained to me that "Sala" was the residence of Radhakrishna Ayi. I went there. She did not open the door, but inquired from within who I was, etc. I replied. But she would not let me in. After waiting for about ten minutes, I went to the Masjid. Baba asked me if I went to "Sala." I said I did but had been kept outside the bolted door by Ayi. Baba told me to go again. I obeyed. This time, Ayi opened the door, fell at my feet, held my feet fast and was crying. I was greatly puzzled, as I had not known her nature. But from that day forward, she loved me up to her death, with a deep motherly love. Thenceforward, she was all in all to me. I spent every minute of my time at Shirdi in *service* to Sai Baba, in accordance with the directions of Ayi. She made me work hard all day long for Baba, mostly at her residence, often at Masjid and elsewhere.

Radhakrishna Ayi was a personality of a strange sort. She would sing charmingly and with deep emotion. Suddenly, she would break into laughter or melt into tears and either continue slowly with choked voice or stop the song altogether by her sobs.

Often Baba detained me at Shirdi, even after my leave expired. In 1912, *e.g.*, he thus detained me. When Syama or anyone mentioned that I had to go back lest my boss should find fault with

me, Baba would reply "*I am his boss*" and keep me on. Thus in that year after long overstaying my leave, I returned and went at 1 P.M. on a Thursday to the office. The foreman of the shop called upon me to explain and reported about my absence without leave. I handed him my resignation. My Officer, Mr. Wilson, the Deputy Superintendent, sent for me and asked me where I had been. I said I was at Shirdi. He knew everything, tore my resignation paper and put it into the waste paper basket. The foreman was discontented but was powerless to do any harm. The Chief told the foreman that I was not his, *i. e.*, the foreman's servant or subordinate. In six months time I was promoted and that foreman became my subordinate.

VIII

17TH OCTOBER, 1936.

Rao Saheb Yeshwant Janardan Galwankar, B.A., Brahmin, Landholder and Superintendent, Home Department, Secretariat, Bombay, aged 51, living at Turner Road, Bandra (Bombay No. 20), says :

I visited Sai Baba in 1911 first. I went because my father-in-law, Mr. Dabholkar and other relations, went to Baba. I had heard of his saintliness but was not very serious personally to benefit by the visit either temporally or spiritually. I went thus four or five times. But gradually my interest increased. He appeared in my dream and asked for Rs. 2 dakshina. When I woke up, I resolved to send it and I sent Rs. 2 M.O. to Baba at Shirdi. In that dream, he gave me two valuable directions, first, नेकीने वागवें *i. e.*, behave with probity and integrity; secondly, be chaste, be sexually pure. I have followed these directions with great care and zeal. Then on one occasion, it was perhaps 1917, when I went to Shirdi, he placed *his palm over my head* and that had a strange effect on me. I forgot myself and all surroundings and passed into *an ecstatic condition*. Then, it seems, Baba was telling others present (as I was told afterwards) that I was a soul characterised by integrity and purity, that I went through certain forms, states and conditions in my previous births (which he described), that *he placed me in my present mother's womb* in this birth and that I had still retained my integrity and purity.

I went to him during my Christmas or other vacations. He never made me overstay my leave. I have full faith in him. He has, however, given me neither Adwaitic self-realisation nor any other teaching on ethical or religious matters—except what I have stated already. I have, however, heard him say at one of my visits to Shridi मी साडे तीन हात देहामध्ये नाहीं, सर्व ठिकाणी आहें सर्व ठिकाणीं मला पाहत जा, i. e., “*I am not (confined) within this body of 3½ cubits-height, I am everywhere. See me in every place.*”

I believe that all my studies are directed by him, and I go on studying Gita, Bhagavata, i.e., Ekadashaskandha of Ekanath. But I was not directed by him to study them, in the way in which he directed Jog, H. S. Dixit, etc. I am sorry I made so little use of him, to get into contact with him before he attained Mahasamadhi. I was much younger and, therefore, not so serious-minded then as I am now. I found also few among those who approached him, fit enough to take to self-realisation. Hardly any soared so high. Even up to other spiritual and levels few soared.

As for dakshinas, when I went to him first, I started from my lodgings to go to his Mosque. But on the way I recollected that he would ask for dakshina. So I went back and took Rs. 2, in order that I might pay it to him. When I was with him at the Mosque, he asked me for dakshina, I paid him the Rs. 2, and he did not ask me for more. I was glad to note his *Antarjnana* of my intention and preparation to pay him Rs. 2, and his kindness in accepting that amount.

Baba has been kind to me. I am perfectly content to continue in the state in which I am placed साइ रखेंगा बहिसा हि रहेना.

(Some years back) In 1921, perhaps, I started with my family to Prayag and Kashi. At Prayag, I was taken to all holy spots. At Bharadwajashrama, my heart was touched and I prayed to Sai Baba to give me the sight of some Sant. I had told my guide also, that besides seeing holy spots, I was anxious to see holy Sants. Within a few minutes after we left Bharadwaja's Ashram, the guide stopped our Tongas and pointed to a venerable Saint, "whose beard descending swept his aged breast." The guide stated that rarely, once in some years or so, that Saint would visit Prayag, that his Saintliness was widely known, that he would not allow people to approach him and that he would accept no money. Seeing him, so soon after my prayer for the sight of a Saint, my heart was all aglow and I went near enough to him, despite my guide's protests. The Sant far from being angry, welcomed me with arms raised by way of blessing and said "Come, child." My wife, mother and other ladies also approached despite my guide's objections. They too were well received and blessed by him. Then I bethought myself what gifts I should give. I had no flower, fruit or eatable with me. I found three annas in my pocket and gave it to him. Much to the surprise of my guide and contrary to his custom, he received the annas looked at the coins with a pleased countenance and pocketed them. I felt that it was Sai Baba that gave me this welcome and accepted dakshina.

Since I got ecstasy by Baba's blessing, I began to pay more attention to *Adhyatma*, i.e.,

spiritual side of my existence. Then came the second stage in 1932. I had a dream then. Baba came to me in that dream and asked me, "What do you want?" I replied, I want to get *Prem*, i.e., Love, that and that alone. "*Baba blessed me with Prem and disappeared.*" Ever since then, I have had spells of Prem gushing through me—sometimes while I meditate, sometimes while I **am** reading, etc.

IX

5TH NOVEMBER, 1936, SHIRDI.

Abdulla Jan, originally of Tarbella, Hazara District, near Peshawar, Muhammadan, Pathan, living for years at Korhale near Sakori, aged 40, says :

I had left Tarbella when I was quite a boy. I had none to support me. I wished to go abroad and see Mecca, etc. So I travelled down south upto Manmad. From there some one who took interest in me said that I could easily go to Bombay and, then to Mecca, etc. But I was informed (in 1913 when I was at Haripur on the way to Manmad) that Sai Baba was a great person at Shirdi who was liberally showering moneys on fakirs and would send me to Mecca, if I wanted. So I went to Shirdi.

As I entered the gate of the Masjid, Baba was in the main building. I looked at Him and He at me. Our eyes met. At once I felt that Sai was indeed my Guru. I stayed on at Shirdi. He fed me and other fakirs abundantly and I resolved to stay on and lead an easy life at Shirdi with him. This

was in 1913. I was not taking a serious view of life then, because I was so young. My stay with Baba brought about some changes in my mentality. When I came to Shirdi, I regarded Hindus as enemies of mine. After remaining about three years with Baba, this feeling of animosity passed away and I was viewing Hindus as my brethren. Now, for instance, I see with regret that at Bombay, Hindus wish to destroy Moslems and their Mosques, and Moslems wish to destroy Hindus and their temples. If both succeed in wiping out each other they will only make room for persons of other faiths to establish themselves in the place of these two.

Baba passed away when I was aged 22 and so did not benefit me on the religious side in any appreciable way. I was feeling disappointed and I set out on my travels. In 1926, I was going back north. There in the Swat Valley, (Malekhand Agency), I found the tomb of a great Saint, Akun Baba who was a Sayyad or direct descendant of Mohammad. It is reported of him that when Lord Roberts was advancing westwards with a view to quell the Moslem tribes there, he felt that he could not move one foot further. It is said that Akun Baba, by his magical power, locked up Lord Roberts in a hill for 3 months and 11 days and Lord Roberts communicated to Queen Victoria (the British Government) this predicament of his. Akun Baba's powers were widely talked of in those days and I lay down one night near his tomb praying that he might be pleased to take me under his wings and help me as Sai Baba had not given me help. During the night, I had a dream wherein I saw not Akun Baba but *Sai Baba*. Sai Baba was seated on a chair near my head, as I

lay there. Baba did not speak. When I woke, I recollected this dream or vision and found that I was still under Sai Baba's care. I had not addressed him—but only addressed Akun Baba, when I went to sleep there. Yet he, Sai Baba was kind enough to come to me of his own accord, (to help me) into Swat Valley 1,500 miles off Shirdi. My idea that Sai Baba had deceived me by giving me no help during the five years I was with him at Shirdi was evidently not right. I got more faith in Baba from the time of that dream or vision in the Swat Valley. I returned back to this side and I have full faith in him now. (I am married since 1924 and live with my family at Koshale, four miles from here). Baba appears before me once in two or four years. I moralise on the past sometimes and see the vanity of my poor existence. Baba was surrounded by crowds in his life-time and it was hard to find room in the Mosque on account of these crowds. What a number of dogs, etc., were swarming round him. Now there are very few men and hardly any dogs to be seen at the Mosque which is as a rule deserted. If Baba's splendour was so short-lived and if it faded away so quickly, what of me, a poor gnat?

I have heard of or seen no "Rohillas" staying with Baba. But I have known and heard of some intolerant Pathans who came to him. The late Baba Saheb, *i.e.*, R. A. Tarkhad, told me of an incident in his life. He was sleeping one night at the Chavadi by the side of Baba. One Mir Jaman of Kandahar was been then with Baba as a recent visitor. Suddenly, one night, at about 3 A.M., Mir Jaman got up and told Baba that the Hindus were spoiling him, and Mahommadan faith, and asked Baba if he would permit him, *i.e.*, Mir Jaman, to

take the sword and strike away at the throats of all the Hindus there and effect Baba's release. R. A. Tarkhad listened with fear and wondered if the wretch meant really to murder him in cold blood. Sai Baba, however, placated Mir Jaman by saying that he (Baba) was *pagal*, i. e., mad and the Hindus worshipping him there were mad, that he was responsible for their worshipping him (contrary to the custom and tenets of the Islamic faith) and not they for his mad state, and that it was his throat that should be cut by Mir Jaman, if he wanted to cut any throats and not theirs. Thereafter, Mir Jaman kept quiet.

There was another intolerant Moslem, named Abdulla Khan of Nagpur, who stayed sometime (three or four months) with Baba. He was a journalist and familiar with Buty, Mahatma Gandhi, etc. He was a Hindustani Pathan and not a Rohilla. He died at Ahmednagar. During his stay at Shirdi, he was occasionally complaining that Baba had deceived him. Once this man beat Nana Chopdar and was charged before the Kopergaon Magistrate. He was convicted and fined. He had no money to pay the fine of Rs. 15 and no security to offer and so was in jail for a while. Then Buty sent him Rs. 15. It seems that he declined it saying, that "he that deceived me should pay the Rs. 15 and no others." Then Baba sent Rs. 15 out of his own pocket and got him released.

I learnt that this man once told Baba, "I see that you are violating the principles of Islam by what goes on here and that your throat should be cut." At that, it seems, Baba laughed and then the man begged pardon of Baba, at which again Baba laughed.

When Baba was alive, I heard him say to someone who feared that Baba would pass away and with him all his work and influence तुर्बात हून दण्डे हनीन which is Mahratti for "From within the tomb I will beat with sticks," *i.e.*, that death of his body will not terminate his influence or activity.

X

20TH OCTOBER, 1936.

Chakra Narayan, Christian, aged about 50, Reader to Police Deputy Superintendent, Thana, says :

I was Police Fouzdar at Kopergaon when Baba passed away (October 1918). I was not a believer in Baba. We were watching Baba through our men. Even though, I watched him sceptically, the result was to create in me a high regard for him. First and foremost was the fact that he was not moved by women or wealth. Many women would come to him and place their heads on his feet and sit before him. But he was unmoved; he would not care to cast one glance of admiration, or of lust at them. He was clearly and unmistakeably unattached. About money also, we watched him. People voluntarily gave him money. If any did not give him money, Baba would not curse or hate or be displeased with him. The same held good about his begging for bread. He did not care for what he got. Whatever he got, he scattered with a liberal hand. When he died, we took possession of his cash; that was only Rs. 16. Yet daily he was paying or giving away hundreds of rupees. Often we noticed that his receipts were smaller

than his disbursements. Wherefrom came the excess for him to disburse or pay? We could not make out. This made me conclude that he had divine powers.

Again his behaviour towards all religions was noble. He would never decry or depreciate any religion or person belonging to any caste, groups or position. When I went there, he was told that the Fouzdar was a Christian. "What of that?" was his reply. "He is my brother." His powers were marvellous. A Police Officer went to him; Baba asked him for dakshina. The Officer replied that he had nothing. Baba then said, "See your purse. There is a fifty rupee note in it." The note was then produced and offered to Baba. But Baba wanted only a small amount out of it and told him to keep the balance, as he would soon be in trouble and need it. So indeed it happened. Soon after this visit, the Officer got into trouble and had to use that balance to extricate himself. After thus escaping from the trouble, the grateful Officer sent the balance to Shirdi.

I helped at the time when Baba's properties were attached at his death. Statements were taken from the public as to the disposal of the property, and the Mamlatdar Magistrate issued orders based upon the statements. This saved much trouble to the Samasthan. Baba's Udhi has cured many cases of illness.

XI

26TH SEPTEMBER, 1936, BANDRA.

Joseph Fouzdar, Retired Fouzdar, Christian, 46, Turner Road, Bandra, says :

I never went to Shirdi. But from friends here I heard of him and I have his picture here with me. I do not worship the picture or Sai Baba. I regard him as a Saint. He had great power.

In 1917, Norvekar (Gajanan) was ill. His son took Rs. 500 and paid it to Baba. Baba on receiving it began to quiver with fever. When asked for an explanation, Baba said, "When we want to do anything for others we have to take on ourselves burdens and responsibilities." Then shortly thereafter Gajanan Norvekar was cured of his fever.

Once I had a very difficult criminal case to detect. I prayed for help. Sai Baba came to me in a dream and gave me directions how I was to proceed. I acted on that and was successful in my detection.

In 1916, there were two terrible Pathan dacoits. I and my sepoy tried to catch them. My sepoy was killed by the Pathan. I was wounded myself and went to the Hospital. This was in a way foretold by Baba. He appeared in my dream the previous night and showed me that two people held and dragged me and took me to a wedding.

I get my daily help and inspiration and great relief from my Patron Saint, St. Francis Xavier. Baba occasionally helps me.

XII

15TH DECEMBER, 1936.

Dadaji Gopinath Joshi, Ram Maruti Road, Dadar, says :

I went to Shirdi in 1932. My son, aged 12 months, had small-pox and fever. The illness was serious. Udhi and Tirtha were applied. Without any medicine, the boy was restored to health. I vowed, I would take him to Shirdi. Somehow, I failed to perform my vow for a long period. My boy got fits. I then remembered my vow and the breach of my promise. I vowed this time that I would positively and quickly take him to Shirdi and perform various ceremonies if he should be cured. He was cured. At once, *i.e.*, in 1932, I took him to Shirdi. There we performed Abhishek. We then started away. When we were half way towards Kopergaon, the fits revived. R. B. Purandhare, who was with us, asked us to go back and see what performance of the vows we were still defaulting in. Then we learnt that only Abhishek had been done and the rest remained unperformed. So we set about fulfilling all our vows. Then the boy, who had been half unconscious and in fits till we reached Shirdi climbed up the Samadhi of Baba and was clapping his hands. We had no more trouble. Again in 1933, we went to Shirdi. On the way at Kopergaon, we got on foot into the Godavari, as some one told us it was fordable at that time. But when I, bearing my son in my arm, and my wife reached the middle of the stream, the force of the current seemed very strong and it seemed that we would be washed down by

the current. I felt giddy also. I closed my eyes and began to pray to Sai Baba for help. Within five minutes, Bala Gurav, a servant of Sai Samasthan, came into the middle of the river and held me and helped me through. He held and helped my wife also to cross the river.

We were celebrating or conducting my son's Jayawal or tuft ceremony at Kashi and we intended that simultaneously with it, an *Abhishek* of Baba should be performed at Shirdi. But we forgot to inform Nanu Pujari at Shirdi and no (simultaneous) *Abhishek* of Baba was done. We went from Kashi to Gaya, and there at the Gayawali's house the fits came on again. So I remembered my failure to carry out the *Abhishek* and wrote at once to Nanu Pujari to perform two *Abhisheks*, one by way of penalty. Then our further journey was safe and the boy's health was alright.

In 1934, my boy had some sort of fever, none could diagnose it. Udm and Tirtha cured it. In 1935, his toe had huge swelling. The Doctor wanted to cut it. But Udm effected the cure. I rely on Baba and I am safe.

INFORMATION

Shirdi is about 11 miles from Kopergaon Station and 14 miles from Chitali Station—which are on Dhond-Manmad line, G.I.P. Buses are available at Chitali; and tongas are available from Kopergaon Station to Kopergaon village, 3 miles off. From that village buses ply to Shirdi. Kopergaon village is on the banks of the Godavari, which is easily crossed by a bridge at most times and by boats when the river is in floods. If one goes by Chitali there is no flooded river to cross. If families or groups wish to have a special bus, they should intimate several days beforehand to Gangaram Motor c/o S. M. Chitali—if the Chitali route is preferred; or to Chief Clerk and Motor Agent, Sai Samasthan, Shirdi P.O., *via* Rahata P.O. (Ahmadnagar District), if the Kopergaon route be preferred. Letters should clearly state the route proposed, the time of arrival at the station and date, and to make assurance doubly sure, be accompanied by an M.O. of Rs. 5 as advance for the special bus required. For those who go from Bombay and from places north and north-east of Manmad the Railway tickets *via* Manmad J. to Kopergaon is better and cheaper. For those who go from Poona and places south or south-east of Dhond J., the Railway journey *via* Dhond to *Chitali* is better and cheaper.

Hot water for baths, meals and lodging for visitors who go for darsan of Baba's samadhi can be had by previous intimation to the Chief Clerk, Sai Samasthan, Shirdi, Rahata P.O. (Ahmadnagar District).

BOOKS AVAILABLE ON SAI BABA

	Rs.	A.	P.
1. Introduction to Sai Baba by B. V. N. S. Part I	0	2	0
2. Devotees' Experiences (English) ...	...	0	4 0
3. Both the above ...	...	0	6 0
4. Sai Baba, a Glimpse of Indian Spirituality by Rao Bahadur M.W. Pradhan, B.A., LL.B., J.P.	1	0	0
5. Sai Satcharitra (Mahrathi verse) by A. Dabolkar	3	8	0
6. Sai Lila Masik (Mahrathi monthly) annually	3	6	0
7. Pictures of Sai Baba and Mandir—At various Prices			

Books (1,2,4) available at :

ALL RAILWAY BOOKSTALLS.

HIGGINBOTHAMS, Mount Road, Madras.

SWADESAMITRAN BOOKSHOP, 5, White's Road, Madras.

SUNDAY TIMES BOOKSHOP, 21, Errabalu Chetty St.,
Madras.

All the above are available at :

HONY. SECRETARY, SAI SAMASTHAN, 37, Charai Road,
Thana, G. I. P.

„ TREASURER „ „ 45, Turner Road,
Bandra, G. I. P.

„ ASST. TREASURER „ Memun Mansion,
Ghokale Road, Dadar, G. I. P.

CHIEF CLERK, SAI SAMASTHAN, Shirdi, Rahata P. O.,
Ahmadnagar Dt.

Udhi is sent free on application. Further information
is given by the Hony. Secretary.

N. B.—Sale proceeds of the above are devoted entirely to Sai
Samasthan, Shirdi.

Telugu—Devotees' Experiences	...	...	0 8 0
Saistava	...	...	...
	...	...	0 2 0

To be had of:—

RAO SAHEB B. PAPIAH CHETTY, 55, Strotten Muthia
Mudali St., G. T., Madras.

